

VOL. 7, No. 4 \$9.99 USD

# REMEMBER THE ROCK

PELLA, IOWA  
BARCUS, PART 2  
JOLIET: 1875-1912  
KEOKUK FREIGHT HOUSE  
CHICKASHA DEPOT CENTENNIAL





# FROM THE HEAD END



**Philip A. Weibler, Editor**

First things first. We have lost a knowledgeable and good friend. William A. Raia died June 30 at the age of 67. Bill's forty-four year railroad career started on the Soo Line, and saw him serve as local chairman for the carmen's union and later as Assistant International Representative for the T.C.U. He was known to most of us as a skilled photographer, author, and promoter of steam locomotive photo charters. It was his knowledge of oil-burning steam locomotives that kept our captions accurate in last issue's story on the 5026. Our condolences to Darlene and to sons Mike and Tony.

Mark your calendars for the Joliet Union Station October 14 Centennial (p.19) and don't miss the 16th Semi-annual Chicagoland meeting of the Friends of the Rock Island on Saturday, November 3, 6:30 p.m.-9 p.m., at Grace United Methodist Church (lower level; enter at rear), 12739 Maple Avenue in Blue Island, Illinois. It's well worth the trip to Chicago for a 'mini' swap meet followed by programs on the 5100 series 4-8-4s, LaSalle Street Station, and Joliet Union Depot.

Probably not many RTR readers have had working experience with cabooses, but I thought you'd enjoy this. In the early '60s the Rock Island's Illinois Division main between Blue Island and Silvis was the last line with waycars assigned to individual conductors. When this lowly switchman worked the outfreight yard at Burr Oak we'd just ask the name of the conductor on the next outbound and then, very gently, get "his" car off the caboose track. Just as a matter of pride, each conductor kept the interior of "his" waycar spotlessly clean and properly set up for his crew. I remember one car with bunks made up with crisp white sheets that were then covered with clear vinyl until time to sleep.

At Silvis, these assigned cars were parked at the west end of the shops on the south side. Here they were close to the 'facilities' and to the footbridge that led over to town.

So...one fine day a pack of Cub Scouts came for a tour of the shops. "Big John" Evans, the Assistant Master Mechanic, would be their host. After learning absolutely everything about the workings of the shop, the boys came out into the sunshine and spied the cabooses. Of course they wanted to see inside one, so Big John hoists the first Cub up the steps and has him try the door. It is unlocked and there is nobody home, says he, so John proceeds to load each of the Cubs onboard and then he goes to the other end to pick them off the steps after their tour. The Cubs came out with their eyes bulging, talking excitedly with one another. Too late, of course, Big John clambers aboard for a look-see. Seems this conductor fancied photos and drawings of, how shall we say this, "young ladies who seem to have misplaced their clothing", all mounted on the walls and protected by large sheets of Plexiglas. Well, after all, this had been billed as an "educational tour."

~PAW



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REMEMBER THE ROCK



# REMEMBER THE ROCK

## MAGAZINE



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14



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FRONT COVER: Rock Island GP18 No. 1345 is seen here switching Marshall Canning at the south end of the yard at Pella, Iowa, on the K&D Branch in the Rock Island's waning days April, 1980. The twenty-one GP18s survived right up to the end, and were for the most part maintained in as-delivered condition, though the railroad mounted snow plows on the pilots during their careers. The smoke stack in the background is part of the Pella Municipal Power Plant, a coal-fired generating station powered by coal trucked in from local mines. One of the leased 47300 series DF box cars is waiting to be added to the consist, its green paint still looking pretty good for ten-plus-years of service. RICHARD HOVEY

BACK COVER: Please see back cover for caption. AJP COLLECTION

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# REMEMBER THE ROCK MAGAZINE



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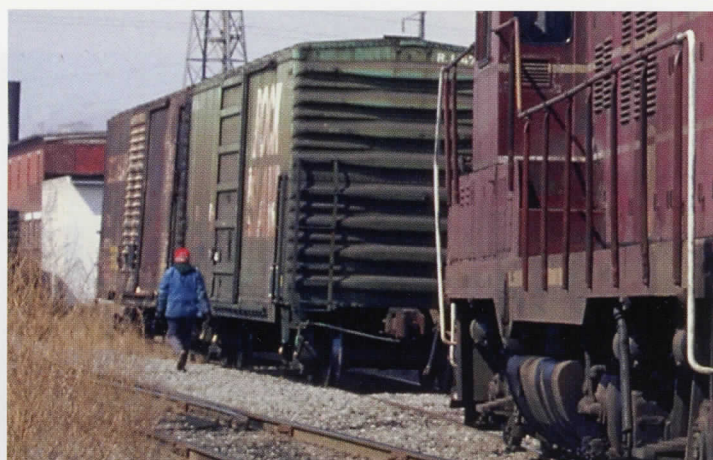
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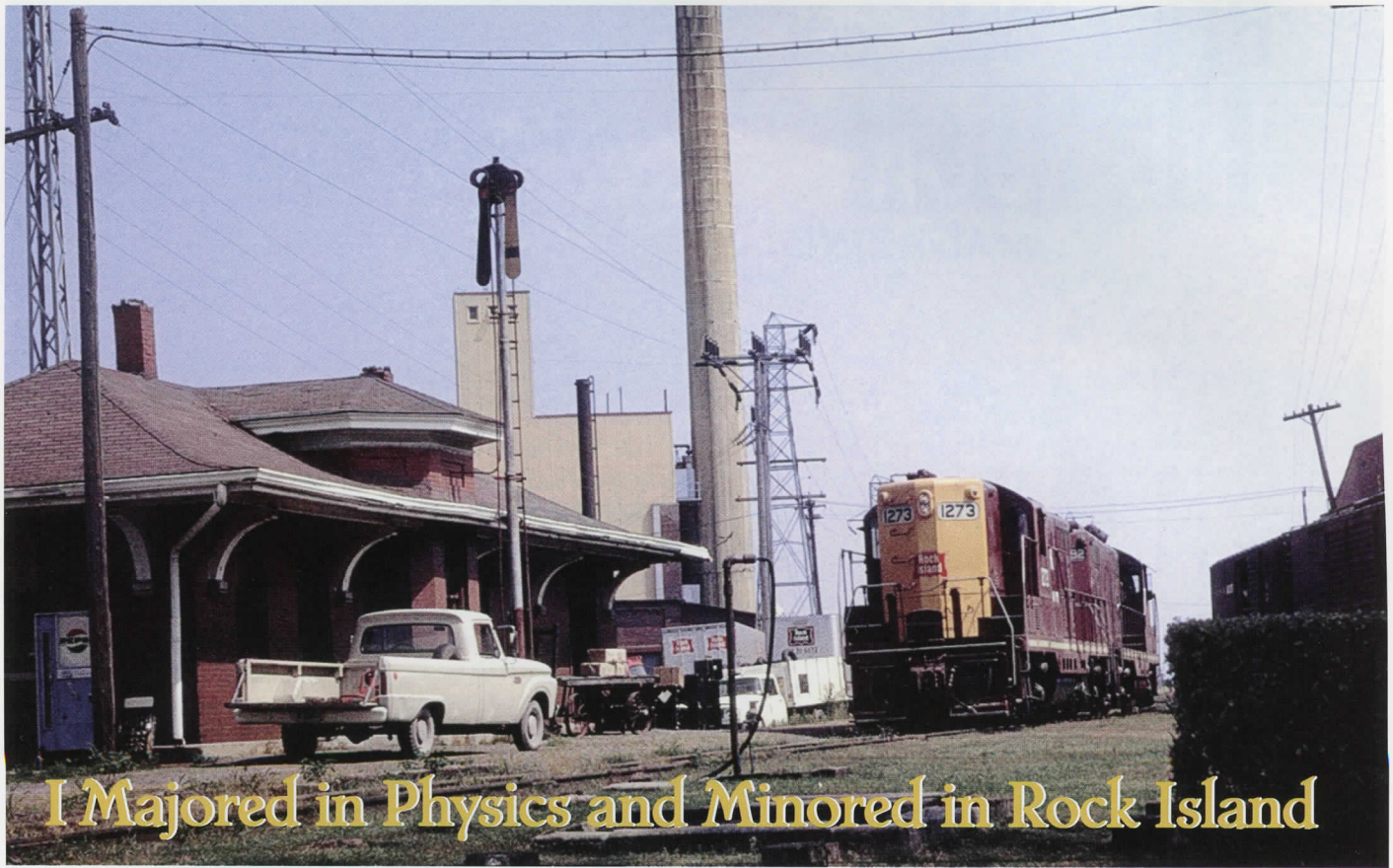
FRONT COVER: Rock Island GP18 No. 1345 is seen here switching Marshall Canning at the south end of the yard at Pella, Iowa, on the K&D Branch in the Rock Island's waning days April, 1980. The twenty-one GP18s survived right up to the end, and were for the most part maintained in as-delivered condition, though the railroad mounted snow plows on the pilots during their careers. The smoke stack in the background is part of the Pella Municipal Power Plant, a coal-fired generating station powered by coal trucked in from local mines. One of the leased 47300 series DF box cars is waiting to be added to the consist, its green paint still looking pretty good for ten-plus-years of service. RICHARD HOVEY

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By RICHARD HOVEY

PHOTOGRAPHY  
BY THE AUTHOR

Though I had been an active railfan during my high school years, I hadn't had the opportunity to make the acquaintance of any EMD motive power. In those days we were living on Long Island, New York and I got to know the products of Alco, Fairbanks-Morse and the occasional Baldwin during my many trips to

LEFT: This page from the 1964 employee timetable illustrates how the Short Line Junction-Eldon and Washington-Short Line Junction trains provided shippers with every other day service. The grade profile is down in the right hand corner. Believe it or not, it's uphill all the way from Keokuk to Nobleton, as the railroad follows the Des Moines River upstream. Despite Iowa's reputation as being a flatland state, there's hills to be climbed, and coal in those hills. Just look at that grade to Mt. Zion; approximately 100 feet in a little less than two miles! RICHARD HOVEY COLLECTION

WESTWARD										EASTWARD												
SECOND CLASS			Capacity of Siding	Capacity of Other Tracks	Station Numbers	SUBDIVISION 4-C STATIONS				M. P. from Chicago	Distance from Keokuk	Signs	SECOND CLASS			Tuesday Thursday Saturday	Daily	Monday Wednesday Friday				
209	203	207				TIME TABLE No. 1							208	204	210							
Freight	Freight	Freight				June 21, 1964							Freight	Freight	Freight							
Tuesday Thursday Saturday	Daily	Wednesday Friday Sunday											Tuesday Thursday Saturday	Daily	Monday Wednesday Friday							
	P.M.		197	15151	K	KEOKUK	TO	RFWT	Yd							P.M.	2.00					
	4.30					CB&Q Crossing	UX	0.7														
	5.05		18	15137		SAND PRAIRIE	TO	14.8							1.30							
						CB&Q Crossing	UX	30.0														
	5.35		20	15122		FARMINGTON	TO	30.1							1.00							
	5.50		16	15116		BONAPARTE	TO	35.5							12.50							
	6.10		30	15106		MT. ZION	TO	45.6							12.25							
															11.40							
	6.30		28	15097	DU	DOUBS	TO	54.8							11.20							
	6.50	A.M.	46	291		ELDON	TO	63.8	RYWFT	P.M.	12.30				A.M.							
	7.20		169	15077	N	OTTUMWA YARD	TO	75.8	Yd	11.45												
						CM&P Crossing		77.2														
			30	15067		KIRKVILLE	TO	84.6							10.50							
	7.45		19	15060	Z	EDDYVILLE	TO	91.6							10.30							
	8.05					CRIM JCT	TO	93.0							10.04							
	8.07					M&ST JCT	TO	95.6							9.52							
	8.19					BEACON	TO	100.3							9.50							
	8.45		32	15051																		
A.M.	8.55		55	15048		EVANS JCT.	TO	304.6	102.2	RYD	9.40				A.M.	9.40						
9.10		9.10	21	15044		LEIGHTON	TO	309.8	107.4		9.10				209							
9.30		9.30	23	15036	PA	PELLA	TO	318.0	115.6	Yd	8.45				9.10							
9.55		9.55	27	15028		OTLEY	TO	326.0	123.8		8.05				8.45							
10.20		10.20	49	15022	G	MONROE	TO	331.5	129.1		8.05				8.05							
10.50		10.50	45	15013	PC	PRAIRIE CITY	TO	340.7	138.3		7.45				7.45							
11.10		11.10	21	15008		NOBLETON	TO	348.3	145.9		7.15				7.15							
11.40		11.40	41	2163	AN	ALTOONA	TO	353.9	151.5	R	6.50				6.50							
12.15		12.15			X	SHORT LINE JCT.	TO	160.2	RFWT	Yd	6.30				6.30							
P.M.		P.M.													6.00							

Trains EASTWARD ARE SUPERIOR TO TRAINS OF THE SAME CLASS WESTWARD.

TIME TABLE Rule No. 14 IN EFFECT:

Ottumwa: Movement over Iowa Ave. crossing by all trains and engines must be protected by member of crew on the crossing.

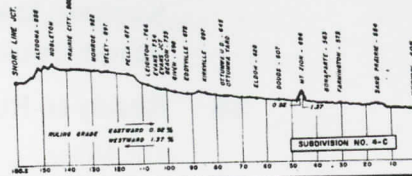
Trains on Subdivision 4c will signal approach to Altoona Jct. by four short sounds of whistle.

Subdivision No. 4-C

TRAINS EASTWARD ARE SUPERIOR TO TRAINS OF THE SAME CLASS WESTWARD.  
TIME TABLE RULE No. 14 IN EFFECT:

Ottumwa: Movement over Iowa Ave. crossing by all trains and engines must be protected by member of crew on the crossing.

Trains on Subdivision 4c will signal approach to Altoona Jct. by four short sounds of whistle.





**LEFT: The crew has probably gone to lunch at the beanery across from the Pella depot, leaving a brace of Geeps, the standard complement of locomotives assigned to the westbound freight, idling by the depot. Check out the Rock Island Motor Freight box vans parked behind the depot in this October 1967 shot, not to mention the cartons on the baggage wagon. That early-sixties Ford F100 still looks pretty sharp, heck even the hub caps are still on her; remember Twin I-beam front suspension?**

Bethpage Tower, where the Long Island Rail Road's lines to Ronkonkoma and Babylon met. Operator Anderson generously took me under his wing and explained the duties of a block operator at "B" Tower. A short distance away, Farmingdale, New York was also a great place to watch Class 1 freight movements along with all the activity at the Farmingdale passenger depot.

When it was time to go to college I chose Central College in Pella, Iowa, also home of the Rolscreen Corporation, which ultimately became Pella

Windows. Pella was located on the ex Keokuk and Des Moines Railway running from Keokuk, 166 miles through the Des Moines Valley to the state capital, that became the Keokuk and Des Moines Valley Branch of the CRI&P. Legend has it that as the line was building north from Eddyville, the hardy citizens of Oskaloosa invested their own labor in preparing the right-of-way to encourage the K&D to come directly to Oskaloosa. However, the thrifty citizens of Pella offered the railroad \$20,000 to turn east, south of Oskaloosa and come to Pella directly. In the early 1860s the line split at a little town called Evans, Iowa with one line following the early Rock Island right-of-way to Oskaloosa and thence to Washington, Iowa, and the southern branch that was part of the original K&D line that went to Eddyville, Ottumwa, and ultimately terminated at Eldon.

When I got to Pella in the autumn of 1962, I was eager to learn how a typical midwestern branch line oper-

ated. There were actually two trains that operated on alternate days. (See the employee timetable on pages. 4 and 8.) One departed from Short Line Yard in Des Moines headed for Eldon and was met in Pella in the morning by the westbound train from Washington. On the following day, the situation was reversed, and the eastbound headed for Washington met the returning train coming back from Eldon. The crews liked to schedule their meets in Pella because there was a great place to eat across the street from the depot, which was just

**BELOW: Timetable west, train 207 was heading railroad north into Pella. The hoppers loaded with coal have come from a few of the small strip mines in Marion and Mahaska counties. This particular caboose was usually on the train; the conductor had "Mac's Caboose" painted on the side. Mac was a "by-the-book" kind of conductor and didn't put up with any attention from us railfans. His crew, however, was as friendly as they came and made sure we stayed out of Mac's way, which wasn't too hard as he rarely left his caboose!**





one of the perks of being a regular crew on a branchline run.

With two trains coming into town at the same time, the Pella yard tracks filled up pretty quickly. The industries to be switched in Pella were: Rolscreen, the largest customer; Marshall Canning, producers of High C drinks; the local co-op elevator, a team track and a couple of smaller industries. In my early days, the power coming out of Des Moines ran through to its ultimate destination—Washington or Eldon. In my later years, the Rock Island borrowed the

**BELOW:** Though you might think they were out on the mainline pocketing mileposts, FP7A Nos. 404 and 405 were drilling cars at the Rolscreen plant in early 1964! Another example of road power that had arrived at Des Moines in the evening and then reassigned to a day job on the Pella branch before returning to Chicago the following night.

power that was laying over from the night mail train and ran it to Pella where the crews would swap power. That way each set of locomotives would return to its starting point.

This was a great situation for us railfans! Power might include two E7s, or an E6, two FP7s, 'Christine,' and the occasional BL2, or any combination of the above. Naturally, I arrived hoping to get acquainted with the Rock Island's EMD power, but as luck would have it, the first couple of trains from Des Moines were handled by RS1 No. 737. But eventually I got my wish as GP7s of both 400 and 1200 class predominantly powered most of the trains. These came in the as-delivered barber pole paint, the simplified cat whisker scheme and the full maroon dipped scheme. Talk about being in hog heaven in Iowa!

I learned right away how much time is involved switching an industry like

**RIGHT:** The Rock Island's practice of using laid-over passenger power on the Pella branch could produce some interesting photography. GP7 No.432 has brought the train in from Washington or Eldon and will return. Once trains are swapped, the 621 aka "Christine" and the BL2 will return to Des Moines in time to power the night mail train back east.

Rolscreen which had a siding with one switch. One line led to the inside of the warehouse for lumber, and the other was outside the warehouse where sawdust was shipped out. It wasn't unusual to see the crew work with that one switch for an hour and a half or two hours.

The experience came in handy later on as I was planning future model railroad layouts, because I realized one turnout could provide plenty of activity for a model railroad operator.







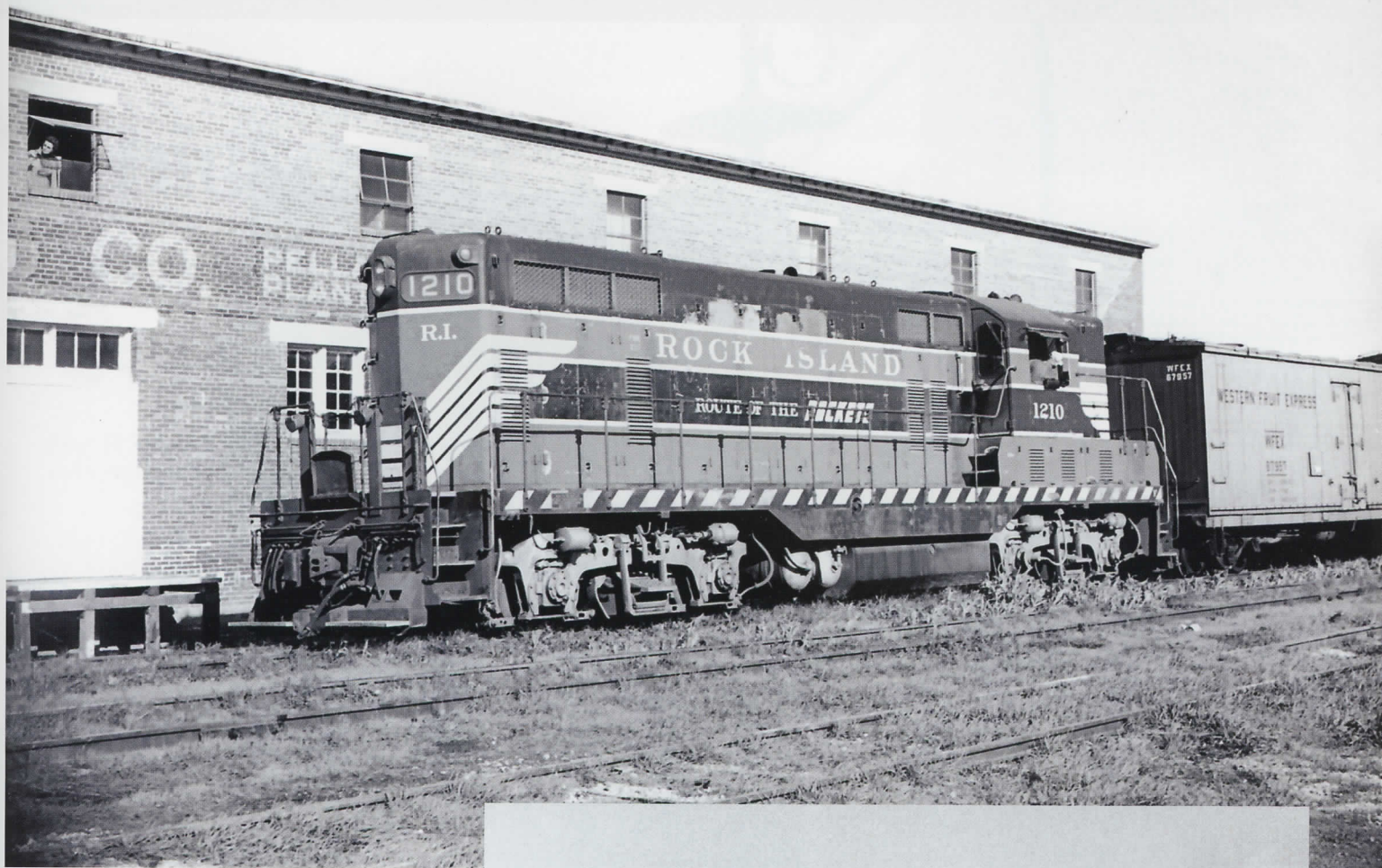


**BELOW: BL2 No. 425 is working its train next to the Marshall canning plant in Pella during the spring of 1963. It too has come off an overnight mail train, having left its cut of commuter coaches from Friday night's rush hour on the Suburban Line. Just in case you might be thinking that the end door was an easy way to the cab. *Not!* Those slanted sides made getting to the cab a treacherous walk for any but the skinniest crewman. Bangin' your noggin' on a hot valve cover was easy enough when a BL2 was standing still, let alone a-bumpin' and a-swayin!**

WESTWARD										OSKALOOSA BRANCH										EASTWARD																																							
SECOND CLASS										SUBDIVISION 4-D STATIONS										SECOND CLASS																																							
209										TIME TABLE No. 1 June 21, 1964										210																																							
Freight																				Freight																																							
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248.7										248.7										CHS&P.....Crossing.....										10015										7.4										12.55									
49										255.6										WEST.....WESTER.....										10012										14.7										12.35									
6.30										262.9										KP.....KEOTA.....TO										10022										19.8										12.15									
6.50										268.0										HARPER.....HARPER.....										10027										28.4										11.45									
7.10										276.6										SG.....SIGOURNEY.....TO										10036										35.7										11.15									
7.40										283.9										DELTA.....DELTA.....										10043										42.9										10.55									
7.50										291.1										ROSE HILL.....ROSE HILL.....										10050										53.1										10.30									
8.20										301.3										GH.....OSKALOOSA.....TO										10060										53.2																			
8.45										301.4										C&N.....Crossing.....UX										56.4										RYd										9.40 A.M.									
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Capacity of Sidings										Capacity of Other Tracks										Station Numbers										M.P. from Mt. Zion										Signs																			
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25										57004										KEOSAUQUA.....KEOSAUQUA.....										4.5																													
TRAINS AND ENGINES WILL OPERATE PER RULE 93.																																																											
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115										20										30011										CK.....CARLISLE.....TO										368.8										Yd.									
75										31006										INDIANOLA.....INDIANOLA.....										360.1										11.3																			
TRAINS AND ENGINES WILL OPERATE PER RULE 93.																																																											







ABOVE: The 1210, in classic EMD "wing" paint, has a wood WFEX reefer in tow as it switches Marshall Canning. Both the wooden reefer and expensive red and black paint scheme would suffer the same fate in the not too distant future. Who'da thunk HI C would outlast them?!

As I got more comfortable in Pella, I began to get bold enough to think about hopping a freight. The easiest trip to make was to catch the train on Saturday afternoon and go to Des Moines. Hitchhiking in those days was easy, and I could usually catch a ride back to Pella, if it didn't get too dark.

My most adventuresome trip came when I talked a couple of college buddies into taking the train south on a cold Saturday afternoon in January.

*continued on page 30*

RIGHT: As if to verify the practice of using passenger units on the Pella branch, FP7A 404's steam generator has popped off as the crew switches Rolscreen.







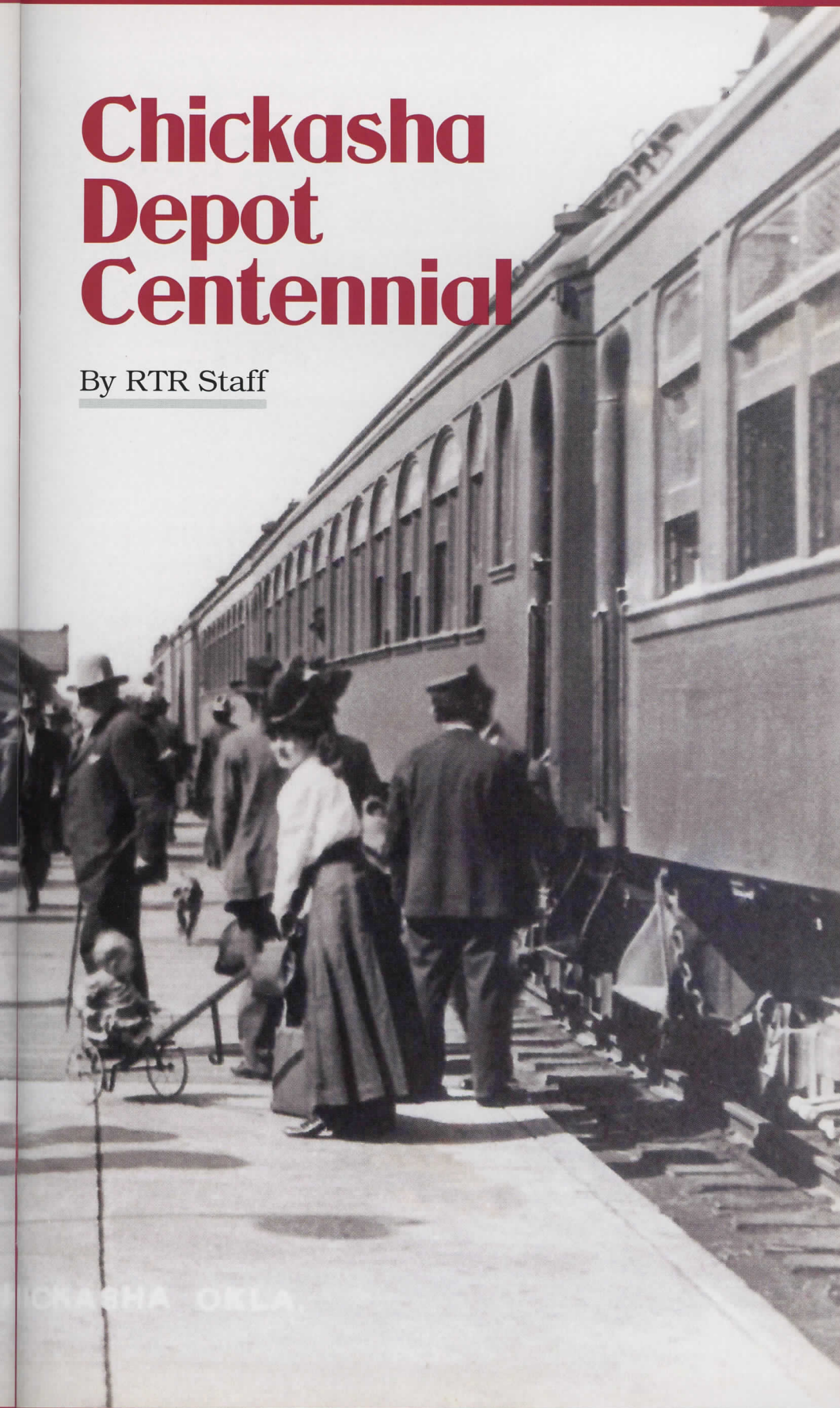
Behind the crowd of passengers at train time, close study will note the depot in the last stages of construction (circa 1912) with scaffolding and wooden (horizontal) nailers still in place. The viaduct just

beyond the station is not yet evident, and the freight house barely visible. The viaduct was built between the passenger depot and the freight station, after the yard became busy enough to make crossing



# Chickasha Depot Centennial

By RTR Staff



*Every now and again, while researching an article we find something worth passing on. We edited this for clarity, but used most of an article from April 2, 1946, in the Daily Ardmoreite, the newspaper of Ardmore, Carter County, Oklahoma. Like Chickasha, Ardmore was once a part of the Chickasaw Indian Nation. Enjoy.*

Chickasha. It doesn't take much imagination to know that Chickasha derived its name from Chickasaw, the Indian tribe, but there are a number of interesting factors in the name. First, Chickasha was named by the Rock Island when the westward building railroad crossed the Washita River and stopped, its furthest rails having reached the point at which the town of Chickasha is located. Second, Chickasha was one of the few towns on the Rock Island road, which at that time was given the name of a tribe in the immediate territory. Most of the railroad towns were named for Indian tribes in the northern part of the Territory. Third, in the Indian dialect the word Chickasha is interpreted as meaning "rebel," and here's the full story. The Indian legends recall a time when the tribes were migrating in the direction of the setting to the rising sun, in obedience to instructions from the Great Spirit, and prophets. Every night a pole was set up and the next morning the journey was resumed in the direction in

the tracks about impossible. No shortage of hats at the turn of the century; everybody 'ceptin' the pooch has one on. That little baby buggy looks like it might double as a garden cultivator after junior

outgrows it! Talk about hats, are those gossamer wings on Mother's chapeaux or the conventional variety? GRADY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY, COURTESY OF CHICKASHA ANTIQUE CAR CLUB COLLECTION





ABOVE: Baggage wagons were loaded and unloaded inside the two arches on the freight side of the depot. The scale where the agent weighed items prior to writing a freight bill was in there too. Trains of baggage wagons pulled by an industrial tractor were a common sight. While the depot at Shawnee is of similar layout, the two buildings share none of the architectural details or even the same footprint. Shawnee has a larger freight house wing and Chickasha has a larger passenger waiting room.



LEFT: Her smile gives no clue whether this young lady is about to embark on a railroad journey or just home from one. Those are post-war Model T Fords in the background.

BOTH PHOTOS: GRADY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY, COURTESY OF CHICKASHA ANTIQUE CAR CLUB

which the pole was leaning. After a long journey, they came to a country abounding in game, fish, and fruit, and here the pole remained erect. A council was called and the majority decided that this was the Promised Land, but one of the leaders of the clans took issue with the council circle, declaring, "All those who believe the Promised Land is farther toward the rising sun, follow me." His entire clan gathered around him, whereupon the warriors of the tribe took up their spears, tomahawks, and bows and arrows, and prepared to force obedience to the decision of the council, but the principal chief of the tribe arose, and stretching his hands above his head, with palms out, exclaimed, "Hamonockma, ikia, ahhiska chickasha!" Translated, this Indian sentence means, "Halt, follow them not, they are rebels." Time and tribal usage developed the word "Chickasaw" in reference to the tribe from which Chickasha derives its name.

The Rock Island railroad extended to Chickasha

in 1892 and when the line reached this point, and temporarily stopped, tents were pitched, businesses began to open up, and the building of the town commenced. Chickasha started out as a tent town and it's one of several towns in Oklahoma that has never claimed to boom. There was no "opening" for Chickasha; the first buildings began to go up that year. The original town site was on land owned by James L. Speed and his native wife. The land was obtained under "possessor rights" a term to become familiar in early Chickasha history. Not willing to give up valuable real estate for a thoroughfare, the main street of Chickasha was built on land which once was a creek bed. There, business buildings were constructed on stilts, and during rainy seasons, old timers tell stories of parking their boats under the stores! Despite the fact that Chickasha wasn't a boomtown, the "Queen of the Washita" has had a colorful history. Old timers recall the ratification of the Choctaw and Chickasaw nations, of the



now famous Atoka Agreement on August 24, 1894, which gave citizens "possessory right" in purchasing one business lot and one residence lot on which the citizens had made improvements. Soil conservation maps reveal the approximate route of a branch of the Chisholm Trail just to the east of Chickasha, and there are stories concerning at least two gun battles between Grady County citizens and Texas cattlemen."

The Rock Island Depot located at the east end of Chickasha Avenue, west of the railroad tracks was constructed from 1910-1911, and opened in 1912. Its history is significantly intertwined with the history of Chickasha, which owes its growth and economic success to the railroad.

A critical and integral part of this depot, was the Geronimo Hotel, built and operated by the John J. Grier Hotel Company, the Rock Island's version of Fred Harvey. The hotel was located just south of the station and was constructed in generally the same architectural style as the depot itself. The Geronimo opened December 13, 1909, and survived until the Great Depression, and was finally razed in 1937.

Public timetables from August 1911 showed three trains serving Chickasha in each direction between Kansas City and Texas. Local and branchline passenger service was provided by two additional trains in each direction between Oklahoma City, Chickasha and Mangum.

Ranching has had a long and illustrious history in the Grady County area. In 1907, 55.3 percent of the land was farmed or ranched. Like many Oklahoma counties, Grady's main crops were corn and cotton. Local farmers and ranchers shipped almost 100 carloads of freight per month, and payroll to local citizens who worked for the railroad exceeded \$30,000 per month.

The depot was constructed of stucco over rough brickwork with a Spanish clay tile roof on all hipped and gabled surfaces. On the north and south ends, the building has a two-foot horizontal stone ribbon just below the roofline, with stone vertical fluting and stone flower adornments.

The entrances on the east and west side of the waiting room consist of three single doors side-by-side, with 6 by 6 window sashes above and an arched window shape above that. The building has a brick wainscot. The waiting room inside has a quarry tile floor.

*The Chickasha Antique Auto Club, founded in 1969, funded the renovation of this depot through the proceeds from the two automobile swap meets they conduct each year on the premises. After completion the Club donated the depot to the City of Chickasha. They operate an antique auto museum at this location, which is free and open by appointment. [www.ChickashaAutoSwapMeet.com/](http://www.ChickashaAutoSwapMeet.com/)*

*continued on page 31*

RIGHT: This October 1973 photo shows the new U.S. Highway 62 viaduct under construction by the Oklahoma Dept. of Transportation. The depot had approximately 50 feet removed from the north end to accommodate the wider viaduct's foot print. Compare the width of the platform in this photo to the view atop the facing page. Looks like the concrete under the baggage cart, and the decorative light has been broken up to make way for another track. Further comparison shows the missing end of the north wing now occupied by the viaduct and the crawler tracked crane sitting above the tracks. The ravages of time have begun to take its toll on this once beautiful structure.

DEAN SCHIRF





# JOLIET: 1875 TO 1912



PANORAMIC VIEW LOOKING  
FROM MASONIC TEMPLE

*This timeline, prepared by the Blackhawk Chapter of the NRHS, was the easiest way to illustrate this collection of photos in the Chapter's archives. Their Centennial Banquet and Reception in October, is a "must attend" event for Rock Island enthusiasts in the Midwest. ~Ed.*

**1875**—Under Mayor W. A. Steel, the first shot was fired for grade separation in Joliet, and removal of tracks from Court House Square. A large delegation of Joliet citizens visited railroad officials in Chicago. Unfortunately, the Joliet people couldn't agree on what they wanted and Chicago & Alton President Timothy Blackstone sent them home to decide. Later came litigation to force the tracks from Court House Square, in which the city was defeated.

**February 13, 1894**—The first track elevation ordinance was

adapted in Joliet, introduced by Alderman Fred Bennitt, during the administration of Mayor Henry H. Stassen.

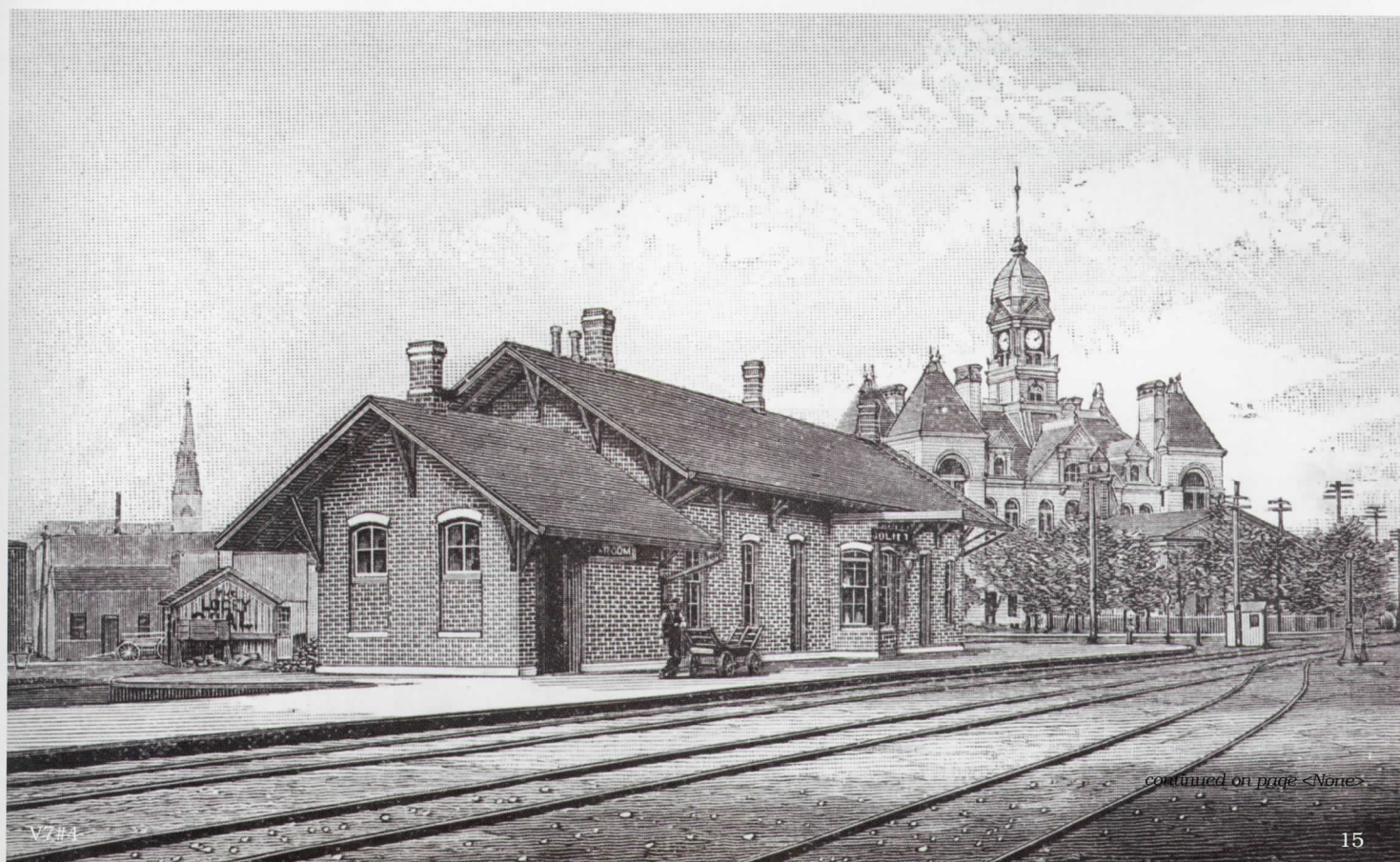
**1886**—Under Mayor E. C. Atkin, ordinances were adapted for subways at certain crossings, in place of general track elevation. Courts subsequently held that the 1894 and 1896 ordinances were in conflict, and that neither could be enforced.

**February 2, 1903**—During the first administration of Mayor Richard J. Barr, another general track elevation ordinance, somewhat similar to the 1894 Bennitt ordinance, was adapted. It provided a maximum penalty of \$200 for each day's delay in starting the improvement after a certain period. This proved to be the instrument which finally brought definite results.

ABOVE: This turn-of-the-century view looking northwest from the Masonic Temple shows Joliet, Illinois, prior to the "high-line" project. The Chicago & Alton passenger depot and baggage house are at the extreme left. Behind it the clock tower of the Will County courthouse dominates the horizon. The tracks going from the right and crossing the C&A and AT&SF belong to the CRI&P whose depot is blocked by the buildings in the foreground. Just above the Joliet Warehouse & Transfer building, the roof of the Santa Fe's passenger depot is visible. To the right of that is the AT&SF freight depot, and across from that is the Elgin, Joliet & Eastern's combination depot. DR. ROBERT STERLING COLLECTION, BLACKHAWK CHAPTER NRHS

RIGHT: The Will County courthouse is in the background of this circa 1880 etching of the CRI&P depot. DR. ROBERT STERLING COLLECTION, BLACKHAWK CHAPTER NRHS







# • UNION PASSE • AT JOLIET

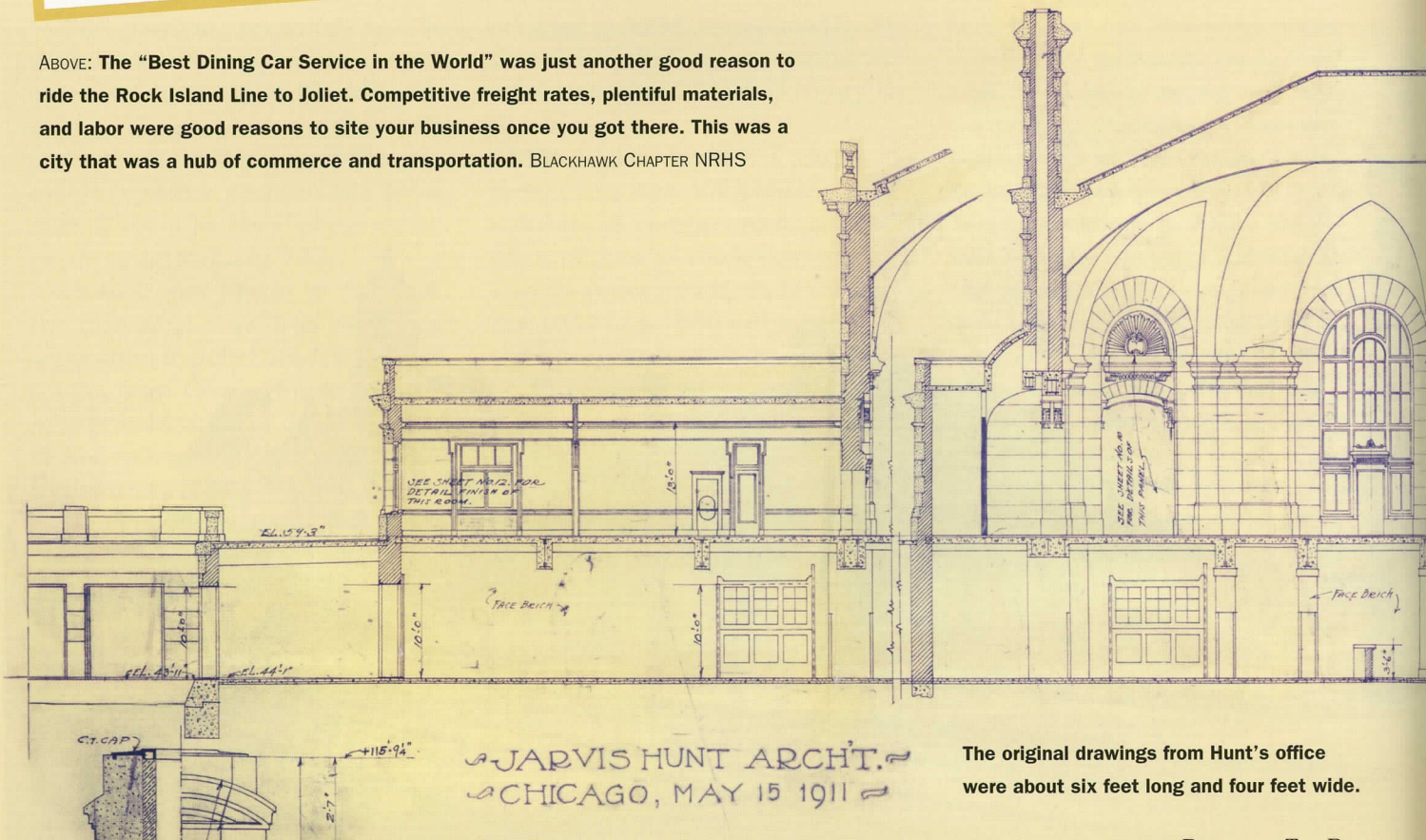


ABOVE: The "Best Dining Car Service in the World" was just another good reason to ride the Rock Island Line to Joliet. Competitive freight rates, plentiful materials, and labor were good reasons to site your business once you got there. This was a city that was a hub of commerce and transportation. BLACKHAWK CHAPTER NRHS

**1903 and 1904**—During the administration of Mayor William C. Crolius, the Barr ordinance was called into action, resulting in litigation and conferences that brought about the adoption of the so-called Compromise Ordinance. However, the measure mustered only eight affirmative votes on grounds that certain streets would be closed, and eleven votes were necessary.

**January 22, 1906**—During Mayor Barr's second administration, the ordinance under which the tracks were elevated and the new Union Station erected, was adopted. It was ratified at a great public banquet at the Steel Works Club, January 30, 1906.

**May 25, 1908**—The first real work of general track elevation was commenced



The original drawings from Hunt's office were about six feet long and four feet wide.



# UNION STATION • JOLIET, ILLINOIS

on this date, during Mayor John R. Cronin's administration. Ground was broken by the mayor at a point on the Michigan Central right of way, just east of Collins Street. Under a supplemental ordinance, prior, the Santa Fe had elevated a portion of its tracks.

**June 17, 1910**—First train was run over the "high line."

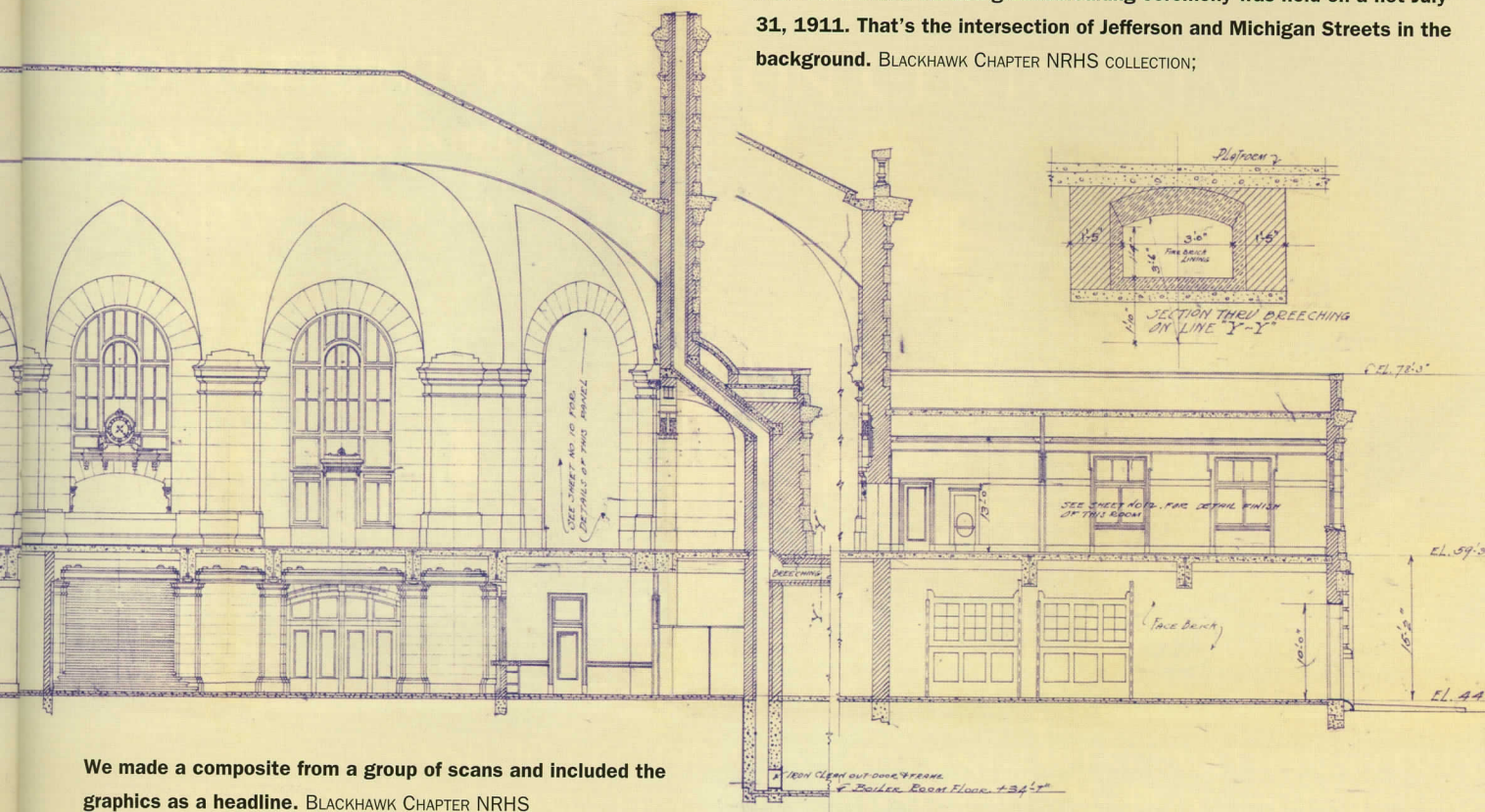
July 25, 1911—Contract for new Union Station awarded to Adam Groth & Co., Joliet.

**July 31, 1911**—Ground for new Union Station broken by Mayor Edmund M. Allen.

**October 1912**—New Union Station completed and opened, and elevation of railroad tracks practically finished.



ABOVE: The Union Station groundbreaking ceremony was held on a hot July 31, 1911. That's the intersection of Jefferson and Michigan Streets in the background. BLACKHAWK CHAPTER NRHS COLLECTION;



We made a composite from a group of scans and included the graphics as a headline. BLACKHAWK CHAPTER NRHS



**Souvenir Program**  
**TESTIMONIAL BANQUET AND RECEPTION**  
 Given by the Citizens of Joliet, to the Presidents and  
 Other General Railway Officials  
**MONDAY EVENING, OCTOBER 14, 1912**  
 Celebrating the Completion of the New Union Station and the Elevation of the  
 Steam Railroad Tracks in Joliet  
 ENTIRE PROGRAM GIVEN IN THE NEW DEPOT



ABOVE: Joliet Union Station, shortly after its completion in 1912. This photo was taken looking southeast from the west side of Scott Street. The above-grade elevation on the left supports the station's platforms.

DR. ROBERT STERLING COLLECTION, BLACKHAWK CHAPTER NRHS

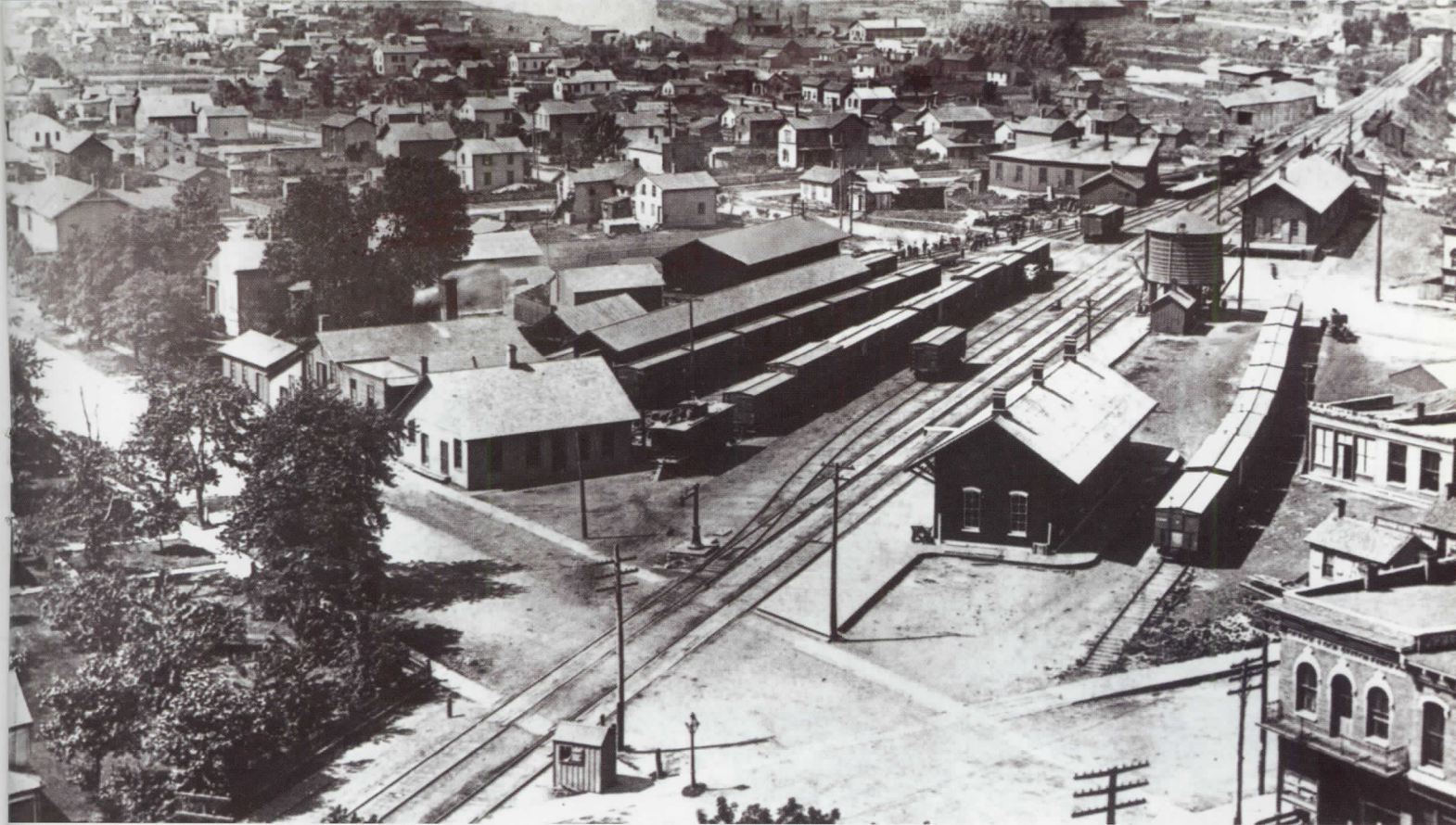
**MENU**

CELERY	OYSTER STEW	OLIVES
	SALTED ALMONDS	
	FILLET OF BEEF, MUSHROOM SAUCE	
MASHED POTATOES	GREEN PEAS	
	COMBINATION SALAD	
	HOT ROLLS	
ICE CREAM	CAKE	COFFEE



Souvenir spoon celebrating completion of the new Union Station and the Elevation of the Steam Railroad Tracks in Joliet, Illinois. These spoons were distributed to attendees of the testimonial banquet held in the station in October 1912. The menu is above it. If you insist on being historically correct, you'll have to bring your own oysters to this fall's Centennial Banquet! Join the RTR staff for an evening of fine dining and fun. BILL MOLONY COLLECTION





ABOVE: This circa 1885 photo of the CRI&P passenger and freight facilities in Joliet, Illinois, was taken from atop the Will County court house, looking southwest. The passenger station, the water tower and the freight station are along the north side of the tracks. Across the

tracks are the roundhouse and turntable. You can just make out the truss bridge over the Des Plaines River in the background. Look at this busy place and imagine all the jobs it must have supported.

DR. ROBERT STERLING COLLECTION, BLACKHAWK CHAPTER NRHS

ED MERZLOCK

**RTR**

# JOLIET UNION STATION CENTENNIAL BANQUET AND RECEPTION SUNDAY, OCTOBER 14, 2012

**\$50.00 PER PERSON—ADVANCE RESERVATIONS ONLY!  
FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT [WWW.BLACKHAWKNRHS.ORG](http://WWW.BLACKHAWKNRHS.ORG)**





*Rock Island Lines trains make convenient eastern connections without transfer at Englewood Union Station (63rd St.) Chicago as well as La Salle St. Station—most centrally located railroad station in the Chicago down town district and on the elevated loop.*

ABOVE: Don worked at Englewood Tower for years, and must have had a flood of memories when he found a postcard that predated the CRI&P signal bridge's removal in 1932. No wonder he added it to his collection. Keep in mind that there was a little artistic license taken with the foreground lawns and gardens, as the CRI&P's team tracks (visible in the photo on page 38 of RTR Vol 7, No.3) took up the entire area. Same goes for NYC's Englewood yard which was located

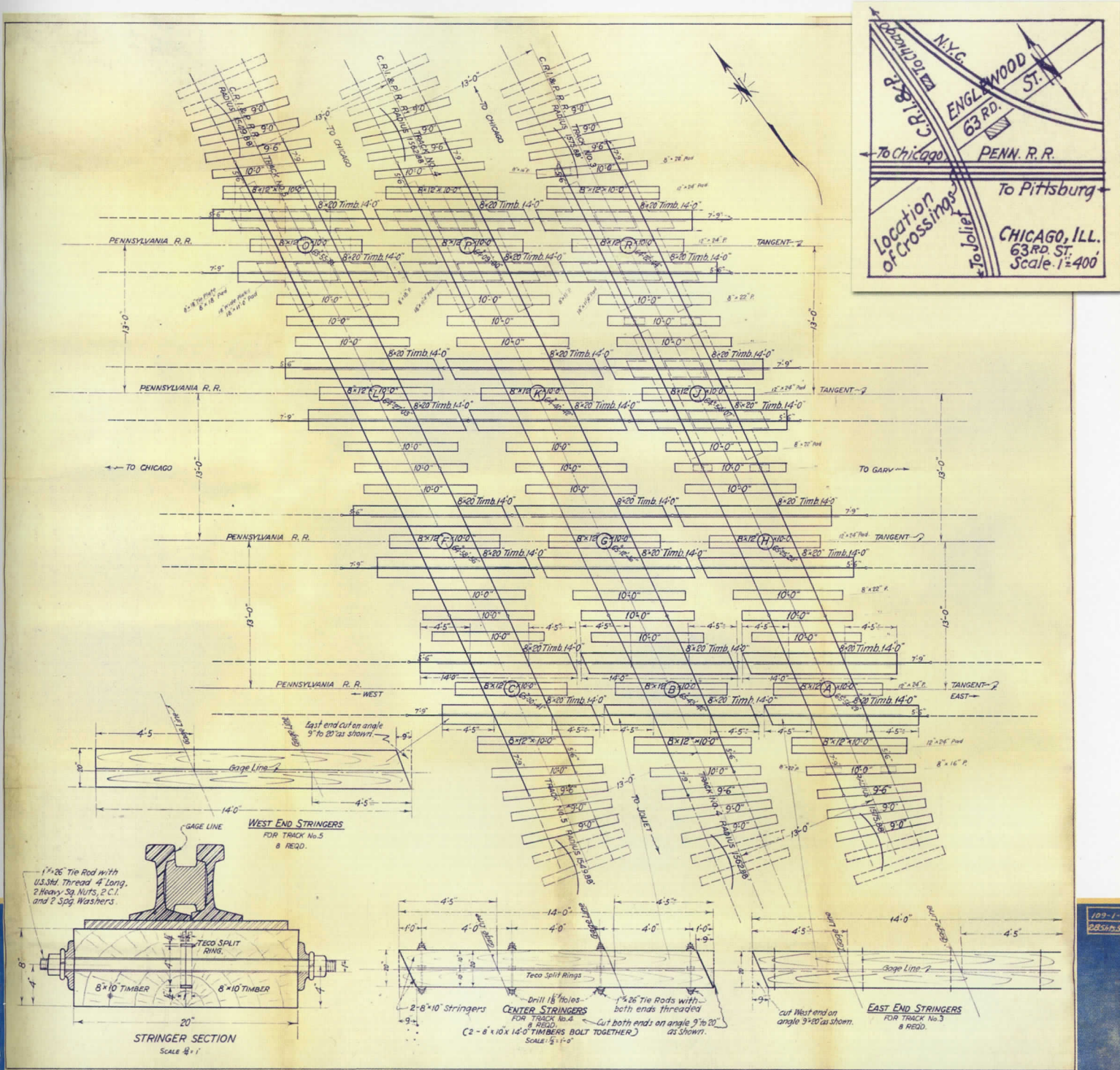
between the water tower and the NYC platform at Englewood station. Chicago's "EL" rides over the spindly truss bridge beyond the water tank and the coaling tower, headed west towards 63rd and Loomis. This colorized view was made during the Roaring Twenties from a photo taken from high atop the steel framework of the Gasometer Storage Tower south of the PRR tracks.



FACING PAGE: We scanned parts of the Diagram of Ties for Crossing of CRI&P and PRR at 63rd Street, Englewood Station, Chicago, Illinois. Office of Chief Engineer, July 24, 1957. Revised June 3, 1958. The original 2x3-foot drawing includes a Bill of Materials.

The first thing that stands out on this late thirties' Track & Location plan for Interlocking is the curve the Rock island Main Line made as it crossed the PRR. None of the frog angles were alike, so the notion of moving parts around to keep the wearing surfaces even was moot. Years later, Chief Track Designer Elmer Blank spent a while at his drafting table laying out replacement diamonds out to be fabricated by Pettibone-Mulliken in the sixties. It would appear that this drawing was made prior to track No. 6's retirement.







# CLASSIC ROCK



ABOVE: If you look closely, there was more going on in this photo than just a crowd of people and a train. A photographer has posed a group of people in front of the locomotive's engine room door. That's him crouched down for a better angle looking down into the viewing hood of a big **GRAFLEX** press camera. Photographers shooting these black-and-white publicity photos liked to use a red filter over the lens. It produced dramatic white clouds against an almost black sky. It also did strange things to the Rock Island's *Rocket* paint scheme: the yellow background on the nose emblem was rendered almost white, the bright red in the center appeared very light shade, and even the dark red on the sides looked like a pale gray.

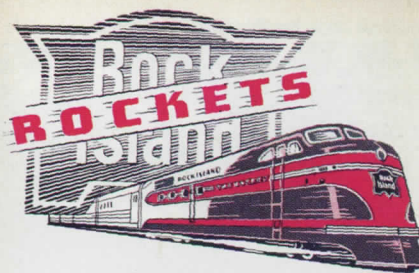
This photo was taken on September 10, 1937 and was captioned: "High on the bluffs of the Mississippi, the *Rocket* pauses at Moline, Illinois, on the inaugural Des Moines run." It's inside the official EMC scrap book presented to the Trustee and company officers marking the arrival of the new trainsets, *The Rockets*.

WAYNE A SCHLIMM COLLECTION

FACING PAGE, RIGHT: From the club car on that same trip, we have a cocktail napkin that's been carefully preserved. STEPHEN EUDY COLLECTION

FACING PAGE, FAR RIGHT: If you look inside the October 1937 Rock Island passenger timetable, you'll find this ad. Seventy-five years ago this was big news! STEPHEN EUDY COLLECTION





*Now...*  
**IN SERVICE**

## AMERICA'S Newest-Finest

*Brilliantly colorful, luxurious, f-a-s-t*

The Rockets are streamlined of stainless steel, Budd built, Electro-Motive Diesel powered, and luxuriously appointed. Equipment includes parlor-lounge cars, dinettes, reclining seat coaches—all radio equipped and air-conditioned throughout.

### Chicago-Peoria (Double Daily Service)

SCHEDULE		No. 501	No. 502
Southbound			
Lv. Chicago	11:00 AM		7:00 PM
Lv. Englewood	11:09 AM		7:09 PM
Ar. Ottawa	12:18 PM		8:18 PM
Ar. La Salle	12:33 PM		8:33 PM
Ar. Peoria	1:40 PM		9:40 PM
Northbound		No. 502	No. 501
Lv. Peoria	7:00 AM		3:00 PM
Lv. La Salle	7:59 AM		3:59 PM
Lv. Ottawa	8:14 AM		4:14 PM
Ar. Englewood	9:28 AM		5:28 PM
Ar. Chicago	9:40 AM		5:40 PM

### Chicago-Des Moines

SCHEDULE		No. 505	No. 506
Southbound			
5:45 PM Lv. Chicago	Ar. 1:15 PM		
5:54 PM Lv. Englewood	Ar. 1:04 PM		
8:30 PM Lv. Moline	Ar. 10:28 AM		
8:34 PM Lv. Rock Island	Ar. 10:24 AM		
8:40 PM Lv. Davenport	Ar. 10:16 AM		
11:45 PM Ar. Des Moines	Lv. 7:15 AM		

### Minneapolis-St. Paul Des Moines-Kansas City

SCHEDULE		No. 507	No. 508
Southbound			
12:20 PM Lv. Minneapolis	Ar. 7:20 PM		
12:55 PM Lv. St. Paul	Ar. 6:45 PM		
2:51 PM Lv. Albert Lea	Ar. 4:42 PM		
3:36 PM Lv. Mason City	Ar. 3:55 PM		
5:28 PM Ar. Des Moines	Lv. 2:01 PM		
(Grand Ave. Station—East Des Moines)			
9:45 PM Ar. Kansas City	Lv. 10:00 AM		

### Dallas-Ft. Worth and Houston Burlington-Rock Island R. R.

SCHEDULE		Texas Rocket	No. 17
Southbound			
Lv. Ft. Worth	7:15 AM		
Lv. Dallas	8:15 AM		
Ar. Houston	12:25 PM		
Northbound		Texas Rocket	No. 18
Lv. Houston	4:30 PM		
Ar. Dallas	8:40 PM		
Ar. Ft. Worth	9:30 PM		

The Rockets are not excess fare trains. However, all seats, both coach and parlor lounge, are reserved, individually assigned in advance and sold by numbers. Tickets sold at regular coach fares are honored in coach seats but passengers having accommodations in parlor lounge must hold transportation good for parlor car travel.

**ROCK ISLAND TRAVEL BUREAUS IN ALL PRINCIPAL CITIES**



**ROUTE OF THE  
ROCKETS**



## CLASSIC ROCK: IT DIDN'T MATTER

**I**n the 1960s (and maybe still) something like forty percent of Grinnell College's students were from the Chicago area. That included me. Overwhelmingly, the question "Where ya from?" got the answer "Chicago," even from suburban kids. The next question would be "real Chicago, or suburb Chicago?" A suburb-Chicago answer such as "I'm from Tinley Park, Illinois" would only prompt another question, "How close is that to Chicago?" Being from "real" Chicago, along with many others, I had easy access to the Rock Island's passenger trains that called at Grinnell. We were joined by suburbanites who came into the city to catch the train, or boarded at Joliet. The Rock Island delivered carloads of us to Grinnell.

Only slowly did it dawn on me that Grinnell students also rode the Rock Island from the other direction. They did—perhaps not by the hundreds, but there were a lot of them. Both east and west of Grinnell, the railroad added high-capacity cars to its trains to carry the students.

*Car Names and Consists*, published by Robert J. Wayner in 1963, says the Rock's 72-seat cars were "Built in 1949 as exhibit cars for the General Electric Corp's *More Power to America Special*, which toured the country but was not open to the general public. These cars had been built to be converted to chair cars after the exhibition train's run ended." The distinction, if any, between a "chair car" and a "coach"

These included lightweight postwar 72-seat coaches.

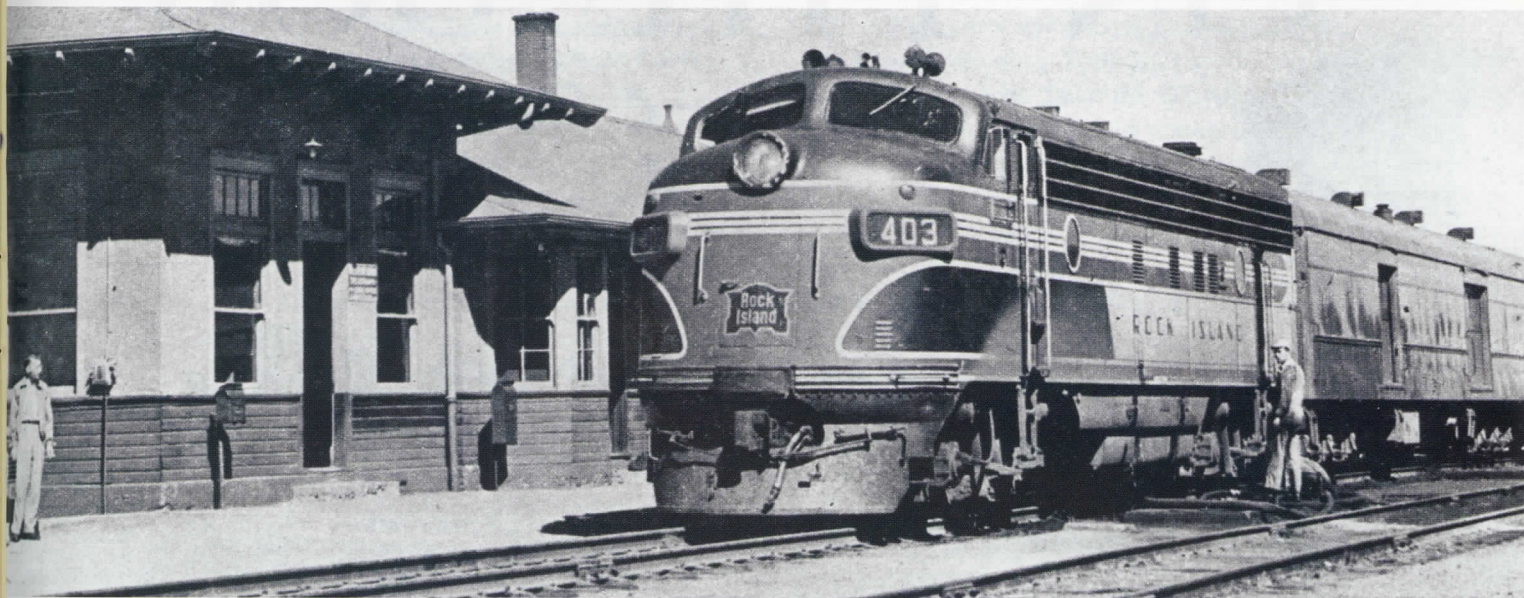
The accompanying 1966 photo shows the Rock Island at Grinnell, spewing forth college students into the jaws of an Iowa winter. Judging from the car's window configuration and the train's position, they have come from the "other direction" on a 72-seater. Almost surely, they have arrived in the afternoon aboard No. 10, the *Corn Belt Rocket* that originated a few hours earlier in Omaha. The 72-seat cars were comfortable enough for day travel. Anyway, after enough beer, it didn't matter. (See *College*, the 2:52, & the *Mongoose*, RTR Vol. 6, No.3).

The car in the photo, below, is named *Enid*, I think. It's hard to tell; some jawbreaker-size snowflakes are in the way. There were ten 72-seat coaches in the Rock Island's fleet. All of them were named for stations and bodies of water along the railroad. Names in the series were *Chicago*, *Dalhart*, *Englewood*, *Enid*, *Grinnell*, *Gulf of Mexico*, *Lake Michigan*, *Lake of the Woods*, *Spirit Lake*, and *Tu-*

was never clear. Passenger railroads used those terms, as well as reclining seat coach, reclining chair coach, day-night coach and others, with no consistent relationship between car designation and capacity, seating amenities, or type of service. Some mail/express trains carried what was called a rider coach, footnoted "not recommended for passenger travel." Railfans must've loved them. HENRY WILHELM







*cumcari*. I rode some of them between Chicago and Grinnell. I know I never rode a car named *Tinley Park*.

**AS** a kid visiting my grandparents in Goodland, Kansas, I had seen the departure of train 26 a number of times. It left at dawn, on a 439-mile, all-stops trek to Kansas City that took 15 hours. Just prior to our family's December 1957 trip to Goodland, the train's departure time was changed to 7:45 p.m. I was 15 and had learned the postwar facts of life about passenger trains. Number 26 was breathing its last. I had to ride.

"Could Larry and I ride number 26 to Colby?" I was trying not to whine. My parents asked how we planned to get back to Goodland, knowing full well we'd be willing to wait all night in Colby for the westbound *Rocket*. So with eyes rolling in mock exasperation, mom and dad colluded with my grandparents who made a phone call to a friend in Colby, Morris Rosenblum. A logistical plan was hatched. Morris would meet number 26 at Colby. He would drive brother Larry and me to Brewster, about halfway back to Goodland. Mom, dad and grandma would drive from Goodland and collect us in Brewster at the Rock Island depot. The trip was on!

The total one-way fare was \$1.77—66¢ half-fare for Larry and \$1.11 for me. We were two of three passengers. The old heavyweight coach bounced and swayed. Just two cars ahead, the engine's horn screamed in the night. It was pitch black outside; the coach's dim interior constituted the entire world. The conductor and brakeman exchanged mysterious words in muffled tones. The third passenger rode nine miles and got off at Edson. Then it was just us. It was superb.

With three intermediate station stops, the 36-mile ride

Train No. 25, the westbound counterpart of No. 26, is making its 20-minute lunch stop at Goodland, Kansas, in the autumn of 1951. Barely two years old and sporting original *Rocket* livery, FP7A No. 403 is fueling up for the 197-mile slog to Denver, which will take six hours. The train will make 12 station stops in the 107 miles between Goodland and Limon, Colorado, then will run to Denver as a mixed train on Union Pacific rails. By 1953, 25 and 26 will be a Kansas City-Goodland stub service. Louis A. Marre's book "*Rock Island Diesel Locomotives*" notes that the FP7As were acquired for Chicago suburban service, but at times found their way west. The above photo from the October 7, 1951 *New York Times*, accompanied a story about the political impact of rural and small-town voters in America.

to Colby took about an hour. Morris was there to meet us. He thought the whole thing was kind of neat. We climbed into his station wagon and headed west on dark, lonesome U.S. 24. The hand-off was dramatic. Low-beam headlights meeting in the night, brief greetings and words of thanks, shadowy figures moving between cars, the looming grain elevator, the tiny town, not another soul in sight. If residents of Brewster were watching, what were they thinking?

In 20 minutes we were back at the house in Goodland. We drank cocoa and ate cookies that were homemade from scratch. It was a whole lot better than hanging out in Colby for seven hours.

By our 1958 visit to Goodland, number 26 was gone. Why, oh why, hadn't I taken pictures? Why hadn't I saved my ticket stub? Again, it didn't matter. There are the memories of that little night adventure, and after fifty-five years, they are clear as day.

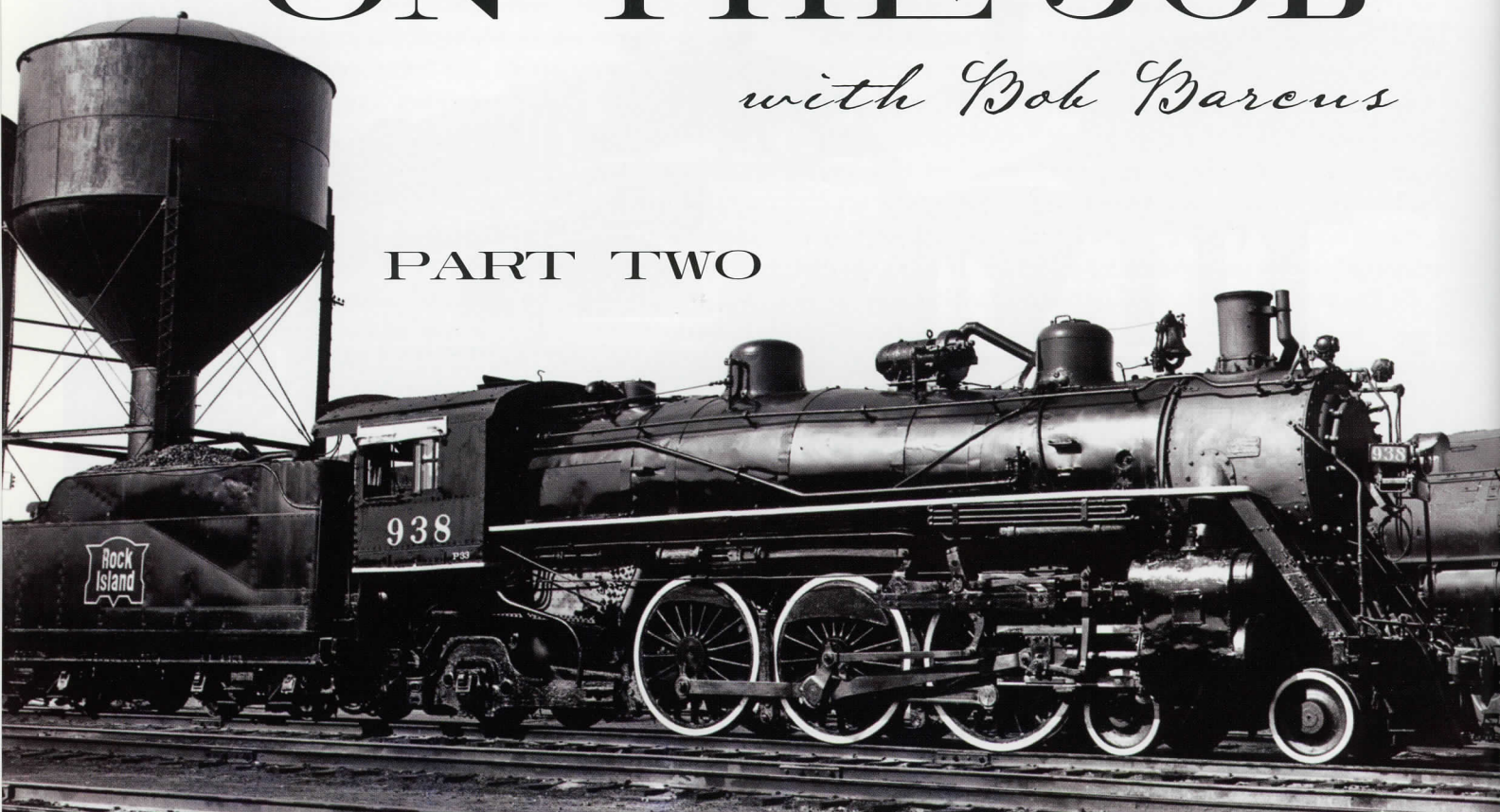
**RTR**



# ON THE JOB

*with Bob Barcus*

## PART TWO



EDITED BY PHILIP A. WEIBLER

*In 2005 Steve Esposito, publisher of REMEMBER THE ROCK magazine, interviewed Robert Barcus at his home. His railroad career spanned the steam era, the diesel age, the demise of the Rock Island, and the organization of Metra. Still answering his phone at 95, Bob and wife Sylvia move a little slower, but they are great fun to visit. We hope you enjoy this second installment; Bob tells a great story!*

~PAW

**SAE: What were your favorite steam locomotives?**

RB: I liked the forty-hundreds [4-8-2s]. They were nice engines. And the fifty one-hundreds [4-8-4s built in 1944 and 1946] They were nice engines.

**Did those steamers ride nice, too?**

Oh, yeah, they rode good.

**How were the controls in the cab?**

We had that standard stoker that fed coal right up to a table just inside the firebox door. The fireman controlled a bunch of steam jets that shot the coal right where he wanted it to go. They had a water pump, too, that kept the boiler water at the right level. If that wasn't workin' I had to use the injector and keep watchin' the water glass and the engineer would be watchin' it too.

Alco built Pacific No. 938 at Blue Island, Illinois on September 16, 1953 prior to it's donation to the Enid Oklahoma State School. The Ray Buhrmaster photo you have of the 938—a beautiful shot—was taken late summer of 1953 and the locomotive was supposed to head down town for some sort of event, which did not happen. A year later, minus the big steam turbine lighting generator, she was sent down to Enid. RAY BUHRMASTER

***Those road engines sure had big tenders, but keeping an eye on the water level had to be important.***

We had one engineer who tried to run from Blue Island to Silvis without takin' water. He should have taken water at Bureau but he just took coal and got out of there. He was a hungry sucker in a hurry to get to Silvis and tie up.

Going by Geneseo the injector busted [*water so low in the tender that the injector could no longer pull water for the boiler~Ed.*]. I don't know why the hell he didn't just stop and back up, there was a water crane there. Well, they had to come out and knock the fire out and tow him into Silvis. They took him out of service when they finally got there.

***So he kinda' screwed up?***

Oh, yeah. Ya' know the fireman used a rod to check the water in the tank. He'd put a chalk mark on it and he could tell how many gallons he had by how many inches



of water were on the rod.

***Did it take quite a while to take on water?***

Not too bad; that plug put out a lot of water. The engineer would want you on top of the tank at DePue so you'd be ready when he stopped under the chute at Bureau.

***Ok, then what went on?***

So ya' get the water [spout] turned around and lock it open and tumble that water in there and then ya' get the apron down and open the gate and here comes the coal. Damn dust is flying everywhere and ya' get up there and shut 'er off and by the time ya' get back the water 'd just be coming up to the top and ya' shut her off and twirl the spout in the clear. The engineer is moving already and goin' right after it, so I had to come up over the coal pile and slide down into the cab.

***You must have gotten pretty dirty...***

Well, ya' did, especially in the winter. I was all nice and clean when I left home.

***Was the water you took out on the road better than what you got in Joliet?***

Yeah, well, like I said, in Joliet they got water out of the creek and then down here they had a waterspout at Rockdale and they'd draw water out of the canal [Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal]—the son of a bitch smelled like a sewer when ya' opened it up—and the water at Ottawa came out of the Fox River. 'Course they treated all that water but it still caused a lot of problems.

But at 47th Street [in Chicago] the water was from the lake [Lake Michigan] and that was pretty nice stuff. Same

way at 16th Street, when ya' washed your hands it was like velvet.

***So there was a lot of difference in the water...***

If you get dirty water that means it'll foam, ya' know, like a tea kettle does. Well, that's what dirty water does, and the water goes down the dry pipe [the 'dry' pipe carries steam from the steam dome atop the boiler to the cylinders. Foamy water getting into that pipe can cause a lot of damage. ~Ed.] and washed all the lubrication off the valves and cylinders. So I'd have to get out and pour oil into the valves and then go around the other side and do the same thing to get 'er to lubricate.

***So, it took a lot of know-how to keep the steamers running.***

Ya, and the Rock Island was getting diesels then too, and they had their own set of problems.

***Now, were you a student engineer at this time in your career? Was the Road Foreman of Engines with you all the time?***

No, no, no—when this guy promoted you, like with me —when I got past the boards [the engineers' written

Number 4057 is seen here in Chicago in the late 1930s with her original eight-wheel tender. Built by ALCo in 1929 with a Chambers front-end throttle and Worthington type 'S' feedwater heater, the 4057 was extensively modernized in 1941 and equipped with a huge 12-wheel tender. Silvis Shops set up the 4047-4061 series 4-8-2s to run smoothly and powerfully at 100 mph and enginemen said they were good for every bit of that. ROBERT R. BARCUS COLLECTION





exam], he was always a stickler. So I said to him, "I got past the boards. Ain't ya' gonna ride with me?" "No I ain't riding with ya'. You're supposed to know your business," he told me. The reason he did that is because we were riding the F7s and he said, "I'm telling you they've got four blowers," and I said "I'm telling you they got five. God dammit, come on I'll show ya' the fifth one." So we go back in the engine room and right up there on the main generator is a blower just like the traction motor blowers. "Oh, you son of a bitch," and off he goes [Bob still gets a chuckle out of this. ~PAW]. But he'd save up a bunch of instruction books for me and I'd read them all, and then I wouldn't be afraid to do something on the locomotives.

I was on No. 39 one night going west. It was quite a stretch from Tinley Park to Mokena, see, so I went back to check out the engine. It was a good thing I did, 'cause the bolts had fallen out of the riser pipe on the engine and water was flying all over hell. So I yanked her off line and got the crescent wrench and put the son of a bitch back together, tightened it up, and put her back on line. She went all the way to Rock Island with no more trouble. Now, if I hadn't gotten off my ass and looked at her, we'd have been dead in the water, see.

#### **She'd have burned up, right?**

Oh, hell ya. Same with boilers going east; they get to Rock Island and the guy says, "You only got one boiler, one shut down." I asked what's the problem. "Dunno, it [work report] says broken water pump shaft." I went back and said wait a minute. I looked down at the overload, see, well, the alarm wasn't working right on that trip. There should've been a blue light. I reset everything and the pump works fine all the way to 47th Street.

#### **You had to know a lot about the electrical circuits on the locomotives.**

That and the air brake. On the steamers it didn't make much difference, but the diesels had MU [multiple unit] air like No. 6 and No. 24. That 24 equipment had a bail on the independent [engine brake] and them guys used to carry a wood wedge and put it under there so when he set the air he didn't have to hold it off, see. I'd say, "I'm tellin' ya, you're gonna' get in trouble with that son of a bitch." Ya, I didn't want the engine brake to set up when I set the automatic on the train, but I'd just hold it off. And every Friday night all those BL2s they had—they'd get 'em all together to run freight to Silvis. I had a job that laid over at Blue Island for three or four hours, so I'd help the roundhouse foreman get them engines out, couple 'em up, and hook up all the hoses and cables and I'd air 'em up. Then he'd say, "You guys wanna go get a pizza?" So we'd load up in the company truck and go up town and get pizza, see.

#### **So you'd hook up all those BL2s?**

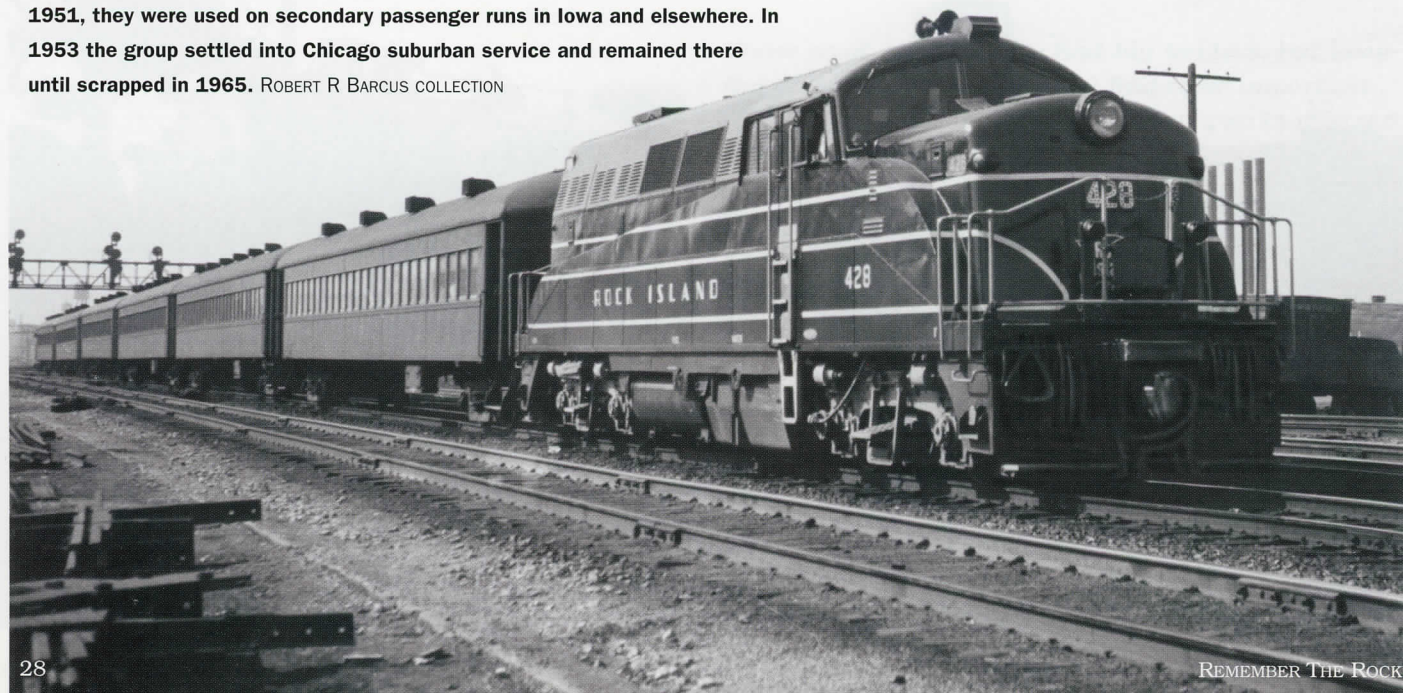
Couple 'em all together.

#### **And test the air on each one?**

You gotta be careful when you hook them up so the engineer has control of the whole lash-up. I remember the main reservoir, the brake pipe, the application line, the equalizing line, forward sand, reverse sand. I could hook 'em up in the dark, you ain't kiddin'. [Sanding is now controlled electrically through the jumper cable that is connected between units, eliminating the 'sand' hoses. Ed.]

#### **So you were a good mechanic in addition to being a good runner.**

Number 428 with a string of 'dummy' coaches in Chicago. The five EMD Model BL2 locomotives were built late 1948, early 1949 for freight service and were painted in the black and red freight scheme. Equipped with boilers in 1951, they were used on secondary passenger runs in Iowa and elsewhere. In 1953 the group settled into Chicago suburban service and remained there until scrapped in 1965. ROBERT R BARCUS COLLECTION





Well, when you like something, you do a lot of reading. I was on the road foreman job so long they sent me to EMD school at LaGrange for a couple of weeks. It was like a vacation. *[Bob took an officer job as Road Foreman of Engines at Blue Island in 1966 and held that slot until he retired from Metra in October 1994.]*

BELOW: Air hoses dangling from the end plate controlled sanding and facilitated the operation of the air brake system. Fittings were duplicated right side and left and both sides did not have to be equipped with a full array of hoses (although there would often be a hose in every position). A main reservoir hose (MR) is missing on the front of this locomotive, but this is OK on the leading end. The MR hose would go in the fitting closest to the centerline, right side or left. The brake pipe (BP) hose is hanging next to the coupler. It is connected between each locomotive and to the train. The far left and far right hoses control pneumatic valves on the sanders (FS, RS) on trailing locomotives front and rear trucks. The AP hose allows the engineer to set and release the locomotive brakes independently of the train brake. The actuating (ACT) pipe controls the set and release of the train brakes. Hoses were different diameters and fitted with different size 'glad hands' (connectors), some right-handed and some left. Locomotives today use wires in the electrical multiple unit cable to control sanding and to synchronize the air compressors that feed the main reservoir line PHILIP A. WEIBLER

### ***You obviously know your locomotives. What all does the Road Foreman job involve?***

You want to see that the engineer is performing his job right, that he knows how to use the air brake correctly without using too much power, and stuff like that. And if you've got a new guy, or an oldtimer, who's having some problem you help him out and get him squared away. The engineers had to take an operating rules exam every two years and I'd make sure they passed and kept working. They had to know how to read train orders and operate in dark territory [lines without signals].

### ***How many engineers did you have working for you while you were Road Foreman?***

I had a lot of 'em out of Blue Island, quite a few out of 47th Street, and some out of South Chicago.

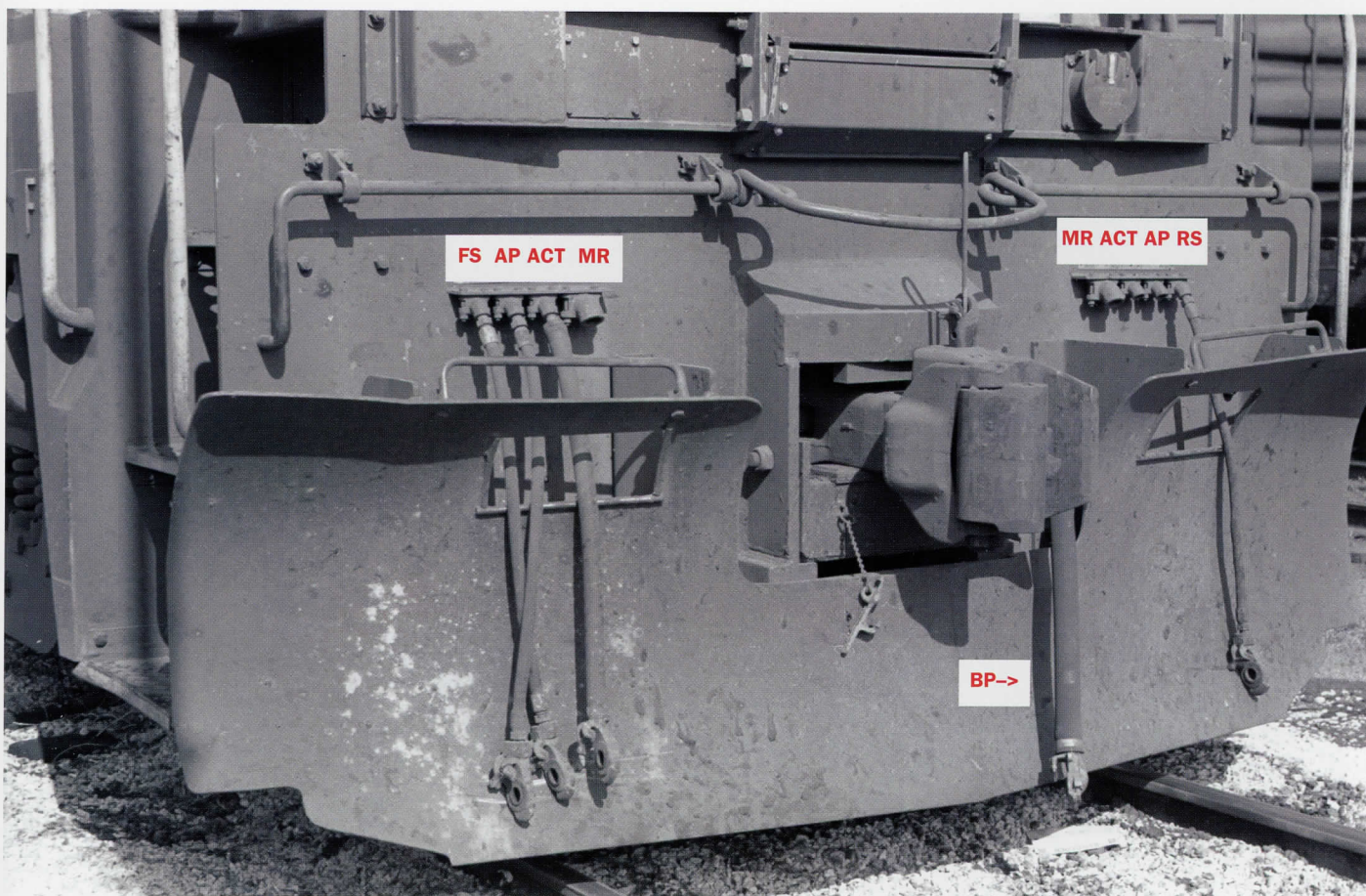
### ***So... 35-50 fellows?***

Yeah, when the Rock Island folded, I got all the crew sheets: every engine, how many suburban runs, how many transfer jobs, how many switch engines for Joliet, Blue Island, or South Chicago.

### ***What went on when Metra took over?***

Well, that was a mess for a while. They had a couple of officers from the Chicago and North Western come down to run things. Those guys were tough. Eventually, Metra bought the whole Rock Island suburban operation and I ended up working for them.

**RTR**





*continued from page 9*

We rode all the way to Eldon, only to find out there was no place to stay overnight (because the railroaders stayed in a railroad bunkhouse). So we hitchhiked back to Ottumwa, and since we only had funds for one of us to stay (I think it cost less than four dollars), one of us would check-in and go to the room, throw his overcoat and hat out the window, to be followed by the next guy, and so forth!

The next morning we found the train we were on the night before returning from Eldon, so while the crew was having breakfast, we tramped through the snow and eventually found an empty boxcar. After a while we heard the crew walking to the rear end as they crunched through the frozen snow. As they passed our car, somebody grabbed a two-by-four and beat on the side of our car; they must've seen our footprints! So, we were off towards Pella. The scary part came when we got to Evans Junction where the train set out cars going back to Oskaloosa and Washington. We thought we might be set out in Evans, one of the loneliest places in Iowa, but our luck held and our boxcar continued on to Pella. If you haven't ever hopped a boxcar, believe me one of the most reassuring sounds you can hear is the whining and moaning of the brake rigging as the air is pumped up. Needless to say, we felt pretty smug that we had managed to hop a ride and that nobody kicked us off in the snow and cold.

Back then, when trains approached Pella they stopped

at the yard first, so we were expecting the train to stop and we would bail out. However, our luck changed as we sailed right through the yard; we figured we were on our way to Short Line Junction! As we rolled through the college campus and our car approached the dormitories, the train slowed to a stop, waited for a couple of minutes for us to get off and then whistled off to Des Moines. So much for pulling the wool over the crew's collective heads!

Weeks later, one of the brakemen said to me, "Listen, it's too dangerous for you guys to be hitching rides in the cars. If you really need to go somewhere, let us know. You can ride in the caboose or the head end." My good life suddenly became even better!

Pella was great place to learn about railroading. My college degree was earned along with continuing education in the other area—railroads such as the Wabash, the Chicago Great Western, and former Minneapolis and St. Louis.

**RTR**

**BELOW: After being chastised for boxcar hopping, I made future trips in the more comfortable environs of engine cab or caboose. Back-to-back FP7As 404 and 405 prepare to back onto their train at Prairie City, with me getting a choice view. Pocket sized elevators and outside braced boxcars spotted at the fertilizer shed spell "rural Iowa" in the sixties. Compared to Long Island in the same decade, it really was a different world.**







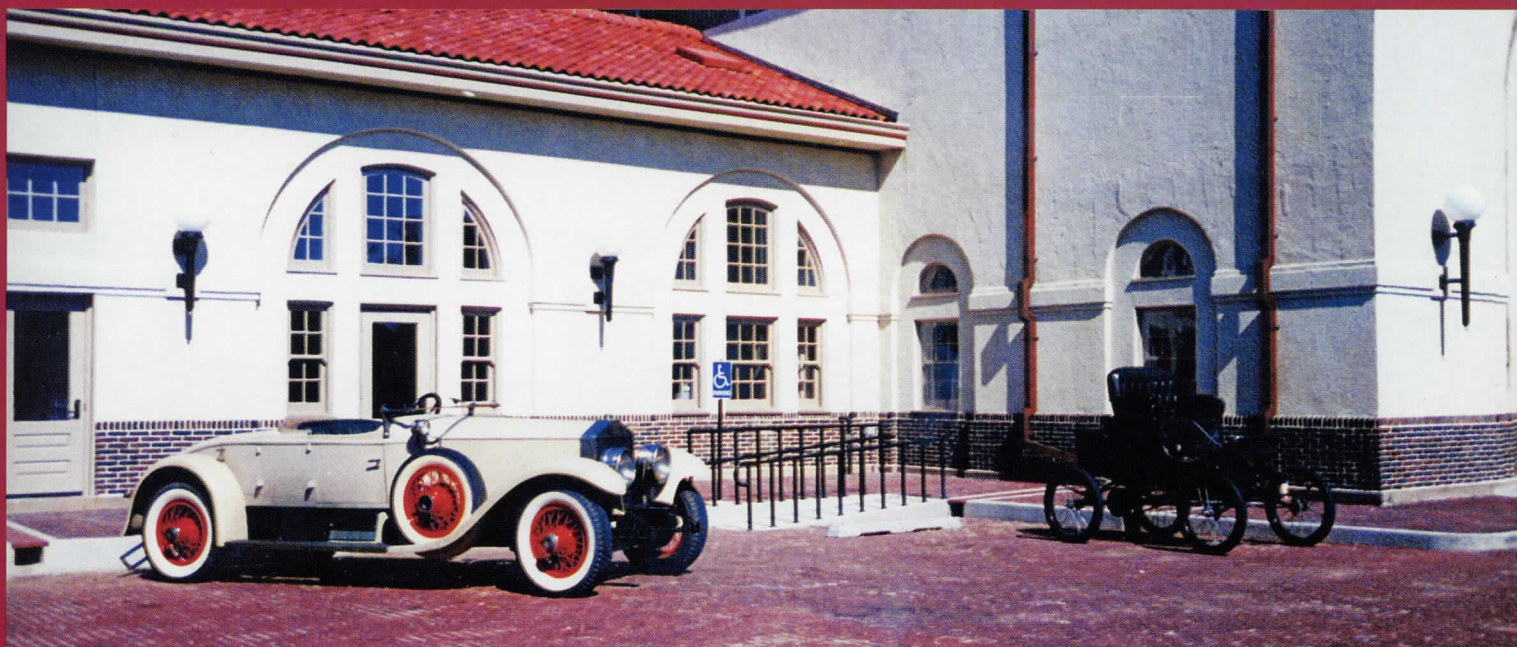
continued from page 13

ABOVE: Restoration of the depot's grand hall (on the street side) reveals the brick construction under the stucco coat of cement. Compare the difference between the scaffolding in this picture to the wooden stuff in front of the depot on page 10. It's only two levels high, but at some point in the construction, must have been built as tall as this welded steel modular version. Looks like the pattern in the stucco-faced arch over the windows was getting refurbished when this photo was snapped. Those wooden blocks on the arch are dies that create the pattern. If you look through the chain link fence on the left, you can see the steel viaduct and the shortened north wing. CHICKASHA ANTIQUE CAR CLUB

BELOW: Not only did the CACC do a fine job restoring the building to its original splendor, its members regularly turn out restored automobiles of the highest quality. Two restored beauties from the Ersland Family collection grace the street-side of the depot's north wing. The white Rolls Royce is a 1927 Picadilly Roadster, a P-I series built in Springfield, Massachusetts. American-made Rolls' differed from their British-built cousins in more than a few ways. In addition to left hand steering, and a three-speed transmission (with the shift lever between the seats,) they featured American made instruments of superlative quality. The black auto on the right is a turn-of-the-century White Stanhope steam car, a true horseless carriage.

CHICKASHA ANTIQUE CAR CLUB

**RTR**





# MODELING

## Scratch Building Keokuk, Iowa Freight House

BY DUNCAN CAMERON

MODEL PHOTOGRAPHY  
BY KYLE CAMERON

Though Keokuk, in later years, would unquestionably become a "Burlington" town, the first railroad to be organized there, and one of the earliest to operate in the state of Iowa, was the Keokuk, Fort De Moines & Minnesota. A pair of name changes and one foreclosure later, the railroad would emerge as the shortened (both in name and trackage) Keokuk & Des Moines (K&D). On May 14, 1878, the K&D was leased by the CRI&P, and although the lease was disaffirmed briefly when the Rock Island it-

self went into bankruptcy in 1915, it was reinstated in 1917 and the K&D was destined to remain a part of the Rock Island from that time on.

Over the years, the K&D constructed a variety of facilities in Keokuk. Details of an 1876 lawsuit indicate the existence of a K&D freight house: "...a permanent and substantial frame building" which had been "standing a good many years." The structure was 203 feet long and 20 feet wide, one story high, and covered the whole of the



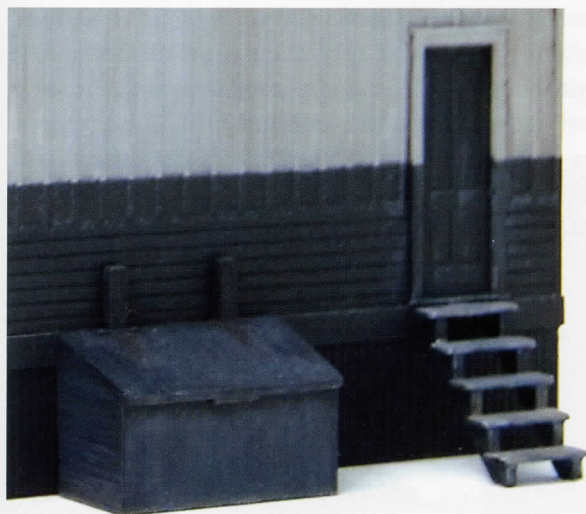


front of lots 5 and 6 of block 3, which is part of the property now occupied by the 1891 Keokuk Union Depot.

It seems that, when the KUD was constructed, a new freight house was built just to the south, at the southwest corner of Bank and Water Streets. The 1901 Keokuk Directory locates the CRI&P freight and ticket office in this building. Eventually, the Wabash also came to share the new freight house and, for many years, the building bore the heralds of both railroads. Due to dropping traffic levels, the freight house and its platform were eventually



**RIGHT: The Wabash flag and the Rock Island's shield were prominently displayed.**



**LEFT: For the better part of three seasons out of four, the freight agent wore down the step treads up to the freight house floor as he or his men marched back and forth from the stove to coal box, scuttle in hand.**

ordered retired and removed in November, 1963, although there are indications that Wabash freight was still being handled there into 1964.

I've never been able to locate any plans for the freight house, and only a handful of photographs seem to exist, many simply showing the building in the background. I therefore had to develop a set of HO scale working drawings based on those photographs and measurements approximated from Sanborn maps.

The photographs indicate a structure with three sections: a two-story "office" at the north end, a single-story freight section in the middle (with a peaked roof that matches the office section in pitch), and an addition at the south end, which aerial photos reveal had a lean-to roof which sloped up to the west. (Unfortunately, I didn't discover this last photo until after I'd built my model, so I built the south section with a peaked roof).

The maps give approximate dimensions of 20 feet wide and 270 feet long, with an additional 65-foot long loading dock on the south end. Loading dock included, that scales out at

about 3 feet 10 inches in HO scale. I decided that some selective compression was definitely in order! Starting with the elements that I could accurately size (such as boxcars parked on the spur beside the freight house), I decided to model the building at 20 feet wide, with the office section 38 feet long, the middle section 60 feet long, and the addition 40 feet long. This resulted in the model being only about half as long as it would have been without the selective compression.

The few photographs show that the office and center sections had novelty siding up to a height of about three feet above the ground floor and were covered with board and batten siding above that, with a wide horizontal board below the siding at floor level. As well, a similar horizontal board separated the siding on the two stories of the office. The addition to the south, however, seems to have been entirely covered in novelty siding. Evergreen sheets furnished the necessary material for the walls (.125-inch spacing for the board and batten, .06-inch spacing for the novelty siding). The horizontal boards were made from .125 inch by .04-inch strip glued on edge and flush with the front of the battens. The windows in the office section came from Grandt Line (#5282, 30 inches x 56 inches 6/6 double hung) and match the windows in the photographs. The personnel door on the north end was another Grandt Line product (#5088).

The most challenging part of the project was the freight doors. Photographs show that there were a number of small windows above them. The doors themselves are mostly Grandt Line (#5267 in the office and centre; those in the addition are simply made of vertical .04-inch spaced V-groove styrene). The framing around the doors, however, is all scratch-built, although it again differs somewhat between the office/center sections and the addition. For the addition, the opening is simply trimmed with a casing of .01 inch x .04-inch styrene. The process

**LEFT: It looks like an early Spring day in Keokuk, as the depot basks in the sun outside its Scarborough, Ontario home soon after completion. Duncan's Rock Island in Iowa inspired HO-scale model railroad is a work in progress; a long way away from the banks of the Mississippi River.**



for the office/center section doors, however, was far more involved. First, the sides and top of the door openings in the siding were framed with .03 inch x .08-inch styrene strips to give the opening greater depth. Then a header made of .04 inch x .06 inch styrene was inserted at the height of the top of the door, flush with the back of the framing, to separate the door opening from the windows above. The sides and top of the door opening, as well as the entire window opening, were then framed with .02 inch x .03 inch styrene mounted flush with the back of the initial frame. Seven mullions of .02 inch x .03-inch styrene were then inserted, evenly spaced, in the window opening to create eight windows. In all, each doorway involved 18 strips of styrene. Those who don't want all that work could use Grandt Line #5080.

A foundation needed to be made to raise the ground floor height level (or nearly so) with the floor of a boxcar. It's hard to tell what kind of foundation the actual structure had, but it appears in the photos to be built on piers

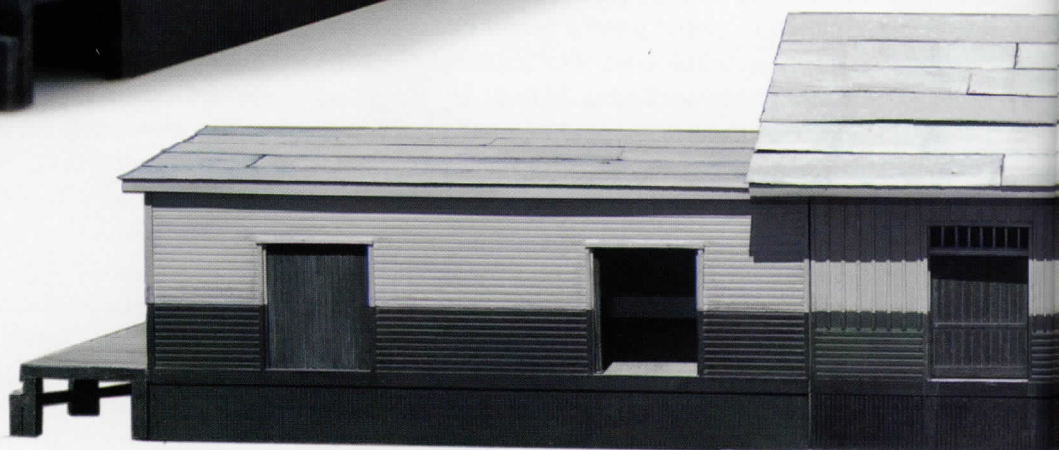
and skirted with vertical boards. I modeled this with .03 inch spaced V-groove sheet. In order to reinforce the structure I glued .10 inch x .10 inch strips around the perimeter of each section below floor height and then added a floor—styrene where it wouldn't be visible—and scribed wood where it would be seen through open doors. A bit of cross bracing was also installed at the top of the office walls.

The roof is made of .04 inch sheet styrene covered with strips of 600 grit sandpaper cut to a scale 36 inches wide and painted with folk art acrylics to simulate rolled roofing. I have since had some experience with the self-adhesive roll tar paper made by Builders in Scale and would use this product if I was doing the project again. The brick chimney is from Pikestuff, and comes in a package with the eaves trough (#3001). Three chimney sections were needed: one above the roof line of the office and two below, meeting the roof of the center freight shed. The downspout is made from wire bent to the appropriate shape.

**BELOW:** Though the end of the building was set up for truck loading of LCL freight, the size of the structure is indicative of a thriving community and its needs, both as railroad consignees and shippers. The truck dock was a lot longer, to accommodate all the freight loaded and unloaded through those track doors.



**RIGHT:** This is the only way we knew how to let casual readers know how long this structure is! Imagine being a clerk inside on a hot day, and having to make innumerable trips to the office on the second floor from the loading dock doors. And don't forget about the end of that 65-foot platform. Those fellows walked more than a half-mile a day.





The caboose-style chimney on the back of the office roof is visible in some photographs and simply came off an old caboose I had. There is a coal bin on the north end that came from an old structure kit. The one made by Tichy (#8167) could be used instead with some modification. The remains of the south-end loading dock (which was drastically cut back at sometime from the full 65 feet) were modeled based on a photograph, down to the stump of an old pier and the cross bracing. Though I put a small loading dock outside the office section freight door, I'm not sure that what I was seeing in the photographs wasn't, in fact, a pile of ties being used as an end-of-track bumper; it's very hard to tell.

I've only seen one color photo from the 1960s, which, at the time I built the model, had me convinced the building was painted in the Wabash's gray and black scheme. Others have since suggested, I believe correctly, that it was actually a very dirty rendition of the Rock's buff and maroon—the maroon seems to extend onto the board and batten about a foot above the novelty siding. The sign on the north end was made from .01-inch styrene. I used 1/8 inch Woodland Scenics RR Roman black for the lettering "Freight Station" and heralds from Microscale sets #87-643 and 87-1229.

Those interested in earlier years might want to know that the freight house bore at least one other paint scheme. A picture, taken no earlier than 1937, shows it in an overall dark color with a two-part white sign

with dark lettering on the north wall; the bottom board which ran the full width of the building read "Wabash & Rock Island Lines" while the top board, about 2 feet shorter on each end read "Freight House." Just after WWII, the freight house seems to have been painted into the buff and maroon scheme, but for a while lacked any sign on the north wall.

**RTR**

**BELOW: The two shorter pilings and the cross brace are all that was left of the 65-foot platform that serviced trucks and freight cars from either side. Just the thing for off loading farm tractors and implements. Keokuk must have been one busy place!**





## READY-TO-RUN REVIEW

By ERIC MILLER

MODEL PHOTOGRAPHY  
By ERIC MILLER



### ExactRail: Berwick 7327 Boxcar

Rock Island acquired 30 new 60-foot hi-cube boxcars built by Berwick Forge in 1976. They were among the first cars built after the change to "THE ROCK" paint scheme, according to the *Rock Island Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment*, by Steve Hile, David H. Hickcox, and Todd Miller. These cars were used in both auto parts and appliance service. I understand that Norfolk & Western purchased all 30 Rock Island cars in the early 1980s.

ExactRail just released a 60-foot Berwick boxcar in HO scale, available in six road numbers, that is very close to this prototype. The ExactRail model is called a 7327-cubic-foot car while the Color Guide correctly indicates the Berwick car interior

measurements at 7440-cubic-feet. Not to worry though, the correct cubic foot specs are printed on the car sides. The boxcar has a total length of 68 feet and an inside length of 60 feet, 8 inches, plus a total height of 16 feet 10 inches and an inside height of 13 feet, which matches the model. The prototype also has a Freightmaster 20-inch travel cushion underframe, Air Pac bulkheads, nailable steel floors, Barber S-2-C 70-ton trucks, and a Plate F clearance.

Comparing the ExactRail model with the prototype photo in the Color Guide, all the details appear correct. I checked details such as the brake wheel location, ladder rungs, uncoupling levers, and underframe sill and details, and they all lined up perfectly.

Of course, the boxcar has the correct number and spacing of panels and exterior posts on the sides and the correct number and style of ribbed end. The sliding doors are also accurate and I counted the ribs and checked the handles, which match the prototype. What really impressed me about the detail on this car are all the rivets on the side ends. Good job!

The lettering and logos are accurate and very crisp. I felt that the color of blue for this car looks accurate and fits in with the rest of my Rock Island blue fleet, including cars that I have painted myself using the Badger Modellflex RI Blue paint (lightened with white). ExactRail's blue seems to be light enough and has enough of the green pigment



LEFT: In 'as delivered paint,' the 29 Berwick-built Hi-Cubes were a statement in optimism by the Rock Island's management, and an indication of the size increases to come in high-capacity box cars. Auto parts and appliances figured mightily along the line, as General Motors and Maytag were two of the railroad's largest customers. Cross country auto parts trains were "sierra hotel" hot on the Rock Island in the seventies.

that is sometimes left out by model manufacturers.

This model retails for \$38.95 and is available direct from ExactRail's website [www.ExactRail.com](http://www.ExactRail.com) at a reduced \$30.95 price. This is the first model that ExactRail is only selling

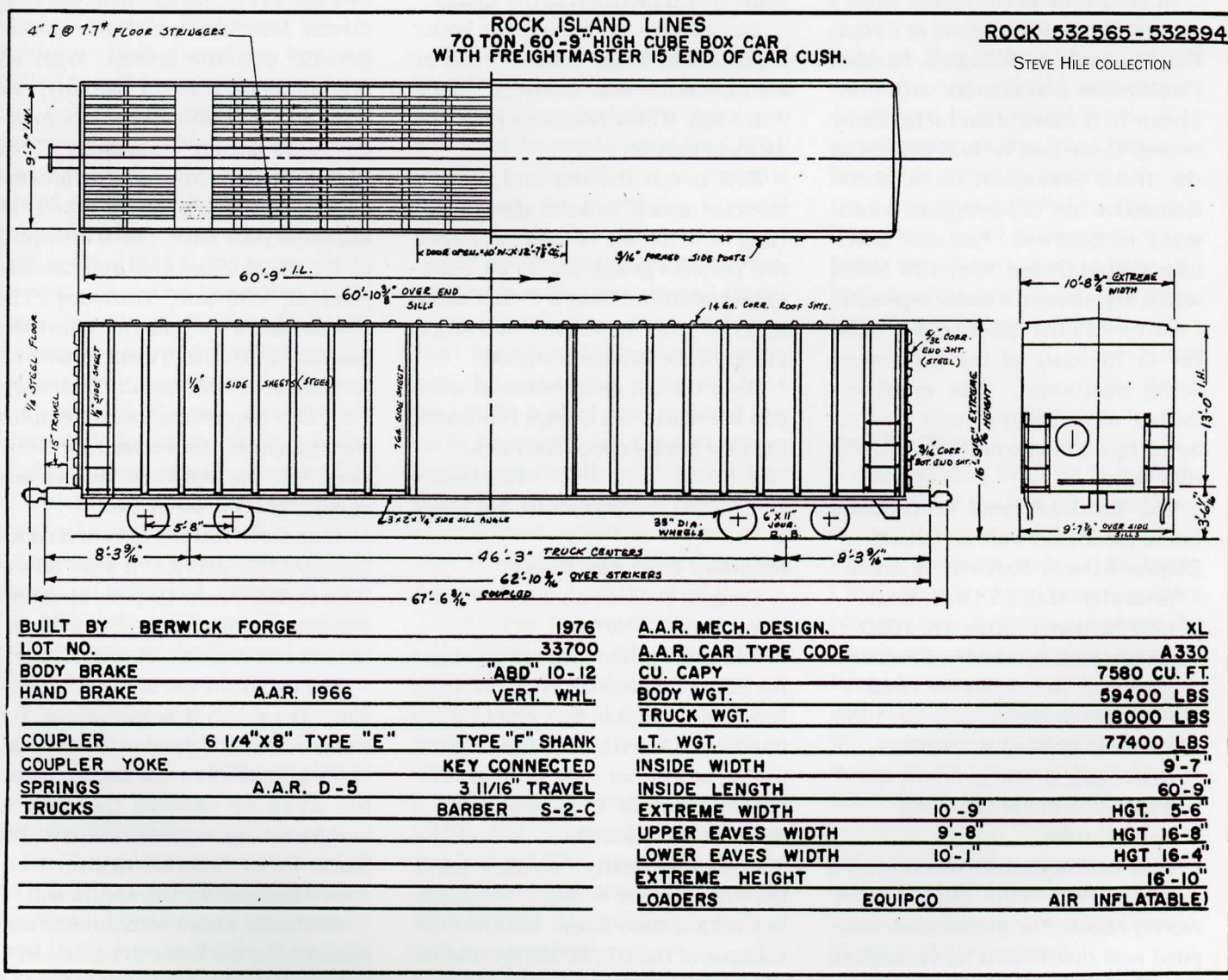
direct, as they have discontinued their dealer network effective May 1, 2012; the car was announced on that day at about 1:00 AM. After ordering two of the models on Tuesday, May 1, the package from Utah arrived at my house in Colorado the following Saturday.

One coupled to a locomotive and a string of cars, the car rolled around my layout smoothly. I had no trouble switching it onto a factory siding, negotiating a (Atlas code 83) No. 4 turnout and an 18-inch radius curve before lining it up with the loading dock. One of my favorite aspects of this car is the Kadee #58 metal couplers, so I didn't have to change out

the plastic couplers like I usually have to do on so many "ready to roll" models. The correct Barber S-2 70-ton trucks are detailed nicely and the metal wheelsets roll very well. The only changes I plan to make to this car are to weather it a little, tone down the bright silver roof, and apply a little rust.

Overall, it appears that ExactRail produced a highly accurate replica for even the most scrutinizing Rock Island modelers. If you are modeling the Midwest in the seventies, you'll want to pick up a few of these cars.

**RTR**





RTR welcomes mail that provides information, corrections, and viewpoints to items appearing in the magazine or regarding the Rock Island Railroad. Letters may be edited for length and clarity. Write us in care of Remember the Rock, PO Box 500, Mendota, IL 61342. You may also e-mail us at: RTReditorial@AndoverJunction.com

## Okarche Incident

I enjoy your publication and look forward to each magazine. Keep up the excellent work!

I would like to forward some information which might serve as a footnote to the "Incident at Okarche" story [Vol 7 No. 3].

At sometime in my career while I worked for the Rock Island or Cotton Belt Railroads at Herington, Kansas, I worked as a brakeman with Conductor R. S. Bisby. Conductor Bisby related to me how he had worked as the Head Brakeman on a steam locomotive out of Herington, southward to Caldwell, Kansas. (Rock Island Subdivision #38, 123 Miles) which experienced a boiler explosion. I don't recall the exact engine number or the date of the occurrence being mentioned. This event occurred after Bisby's crew was relieved by a El Reno crew, en route to that point.

The headend crew southbound out of Herington were as follows:

Engineer Oscar Barnett, Fireman, Seniority, May 25 1914; Engineer Seniority, June 16, 1920  
Fireman Jack B. Jacobs, Fireman Seniority: November 30 1942;  
Engineer Seniority: July 19, 1956  
Brakeman Richard S. Bisby, Brakeman Seniority: April 20, 1945; Conductor Seniority: April 9, 1954

This information is taken from a January 1953 "Time Book and Seniority Roster," a publication compiled and distributed by Herington, Kansas, area merchants.

Conductor Bisby indicated that

Engineer Barnett was a conscientious engineer and that this incident could just as well happen on their portion of this trip.

The Department of Transportation Online Library has ICC Historical Railroad Investigation Reports where I had previously read the investigation of this particular accident. However, it no longer appears in the 1952 file.

~Lyle W. Wade  
Herington, Kansas

I am not a young person and being an ex RI employee, I always felt that I knew a lot about the Rock Island.

Each issue of RTR brings to light some new dimension of the CRI&P.

An excellent example is the boiler explosion of 5026. I either read or heard, about this incident, many years ago. RTR's story describes the incident clearly.

RTR is fun reading and being a modeler myself, articles about modeling RI items are of interest. I have two projects going, one is kit bashing/scratch building a P-33 Pacific and the other is scratch building a model of the Brainerd station.

Keep up the great editorial work you are doing. It's always fun learning new things about the Rock.

~Phil Lundy  
Plymouth, Michigan

## Another Success Story

Congratulations on another great issue [in Vol 7 No 3]!

The cover photo and article about the Santa Fe inspection trip over the Amarillo-Memphis line grabbed my immediate attention. What a fascinating story, not only from an historical point of view, but from a strategic one as well.

Running in early February 1975, the trip occurred during a very short, but critical time frame, between the collapse of the UP/RI merger and its subsequent upheaval of the executive suite at the Rock Island in late

1974 on the one hand, and the bankruptcy filing on March 17, 1975 on the other.

In 1977, while in the Marketing Department for the Rock Island, I was transferred from Chicago to Atlanta as part of a major "beefing up" of the RI's sales force and marketing efforts throughout the entire south-east. Our mission was to increase traffic on the Sunbelt (Choctaw) line. Therefore, I also found your ancillary article on "Memphis Competition" of very great interest.

The table showing the various competitive schedules does not show a date. According to the September/October 1977 *Official Guide*, the *Blue Streak Merchandise* of the Cotton Belt-SP was the fastest. With an evening departure on Monday, the train was scheduled into Los Angeles 10:30 pm on Wednesday. This slightly beat the MP-ATSF *Whirlwind* over Sweetwater, which is exactly as shown in your table, out of Memphis at 9 p.m. Monday and into Los Angeles at 4:30 a.m. Thursday. The Frisco-Santa Fe had the latest departure, 4:30 a.m., Tuesday, with an arrival at 11:59 p.m., Thursday. This late departure from Memphis was no doubt convenient for shippers, but the schedule was clearly slower than the other two.

Then there was the *El Venado* Rock Island/ATSF service. It was advertised in 1977 as a 10 p.m. Memphis departure with a 9 p.m., Saturday arrival in Los Angeles. Yes, Saturday!

You can draw the obvious conclusion. The greatest sales force in the world couldn't overcome this hurdle. I clearly remember one day in the office when we checked the records and found one car received from the Santa Fe at Amarillo destined beyond Memphis for the southeast!

And lastly, I read with interest and amusement the letter in *Rocket RPO* regarding the Rock Island's infamous AB6 units. The writer, Les Brandt, is



critical of a previous issue in which your editor Phil Weibler stated that the AB6s were built for the Colorado Springs section of the *Rocky Mountain Rocket*. Mr. Brandt quotes Thomas Lee's first book which says they were built for the Kansas City section of the *Rocky Mountain Rocket*. I think both people are half right and half wrong. The original *Rocky Mountain Rocket* went into service in November 1939 between Chicago and Denver/Colorado Springs. It was a seven-car train with one E3 locomotive. When the Kansas City section was added in late June of 1940, powered by an AB6, three additional cars, including one rebuilt heavy-weight car, were added to the consist between Belleville, Kansas and Limon, Colorado. There were two 1% grades, in both directions, between Belleville and Limon.

It only makes sense that if three more cars were added to the consist, the 1000 hp of the AB6 would be added to ensure adherence to the schedule. Then, when the train was split apart at Limon, the power would be split also. The two AB6s could thus handle *both* the Colorado Springs section and the Kansas City section at the same time. In Thomas Lee's second RI book, *Rock Island Westward, Rails to the Rockies*, he includes a photo of AB6 number 750 in Colorado Springs on August 4, 1940, five weeks after the Kansas City section was inaugurated. In addition, on page 174, he states that the AB6 units, 750 and 751, "*were built specially for the Kansas City and Colorado Springs sections.*"

Keep up the great work!

~Dennis Opferman  
Arlington, Texas

## Happy Birthday

When the decision was made to do an article in this issue of RTR on the Centennial Birthday of the Rock Island Depot in Chickasha, it brought a smile and a flood of memories dating back to the early 1950s.



This handsome depot was full of grandeur and excitement to a young lad growing up, loving the trains and watching the employees of the CRI&P go about their duties in keeping everything on schedule. I would sneak inside the ticket room and "steal" all the timetables of the various roads, with their colorful advertising and take them home to devour their contents. The men's restroom had the toilet stall protected by a door [with a sign] that required five cents for usage, but I would always crawl underneath as a nickel was never in my possession. I have, in my Rock Island collectibles, that very sign that was once affixed to that door, and, no, I did not steal it.

Here was the depot where I met J.W. "Red" Betts, who worked the evening shift and taught me all things Rock Island. My beloved Red is gone now and the depot almost went with him.

Following the Rock liquidation in 1980, the Chickasha depot languished for what seemed a lifetime until the Chickasha Antique Auto Club bought it and did a one-million dollar restoration.

It was with great pride that I gathered with a sizable crowd of local

folks on May 3rd and stood on the viaduct and pointed my camera southward to capture UP's No. 844 steam engine pulling into Chickasha [see photo above] to celebrate the depot's Centennial Birthday. The only thing that could have made it any better would have been to have had Red standing next to me, but somehow I knew he was celebrating, too.

~Dean Schirf  
via Email

## Family Ties

Just finished Vol 7 No 3. I've subscribed since the first issue and have enjoyed every one of them. So yes, I feel you guys are on the right track. I like the mix of equipment articles plus the ones written by or about the people who worked for the Rock Island. As time goes on there will be less and less of those folks to relate the experience of working on the Rock. I think the Rock Collecting articles also help bridge this gap with installments like "Family Ties." I really enjoy articles about terminals and yards. Sure would like to see if Trenton, Missouri, or even Horton, Kansas, will be covered.

Wes Rupe, Jr.  
via Email





200 L 378 *Explosives*  
*dynamite*  
 DYNAMITE D-993  
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JUN 6 1959

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 WIREPHOTO

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**CHICAGO TRAIN CUTS BOMB FUSE**  
 This suitcase, loaded with 99 sticks of dynamite, was found between the Rock Island Lines tracks east of Des Moines, Iowa. Its burning fuse was cut off by wheels of the Rocky Mountain Rocket, en route to Chicago from Denver, with 200 or more passengers aboard. Suitcase was discovered when a member of train's crew radioed Des Moines station that train had passed over something on tracks. (AP Wirephoto)

In a scene reminiscent of the Caped Crusader or maybe Wile E. Coyote, we have the proverbial suitcase full of dynamite on the tracks, and a burning fuse running towards it. No laughing matter, except for the way the train defused the explosion on its own as reported in the pasted clipping to the left. Were the perpetrators behind a rock a couple hundred yards away, and was there a cartoon-like explosion of temper when their ill plans went awry? We can only guess and be thankful for the good luck and safe passage of all those people on east-bound No. 8. AJP COLLECTION